

# THE DECATHLON ASSOCIATION

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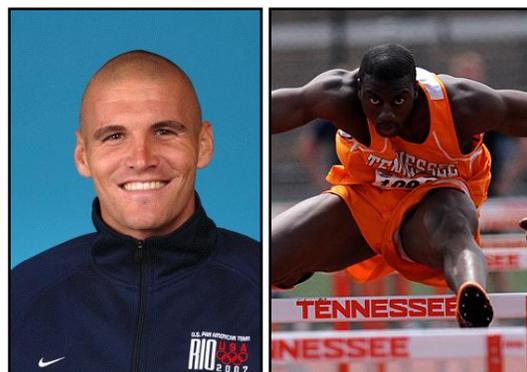
August (3), 2008

## BEIJING DECATHLON NOTES

### Addy, Boyles in Olympic News

**Hello Again.....**The Olympic aspirations of a pair of American decathletes went in opposite direction in the past two days. On the negative side, Chris Boyles, fresh from a 6<sup>th</sup> place finish at the Thorpe Cup, was denied visa to China for his participation in *Team Darfur*. *Team Darfur* is an international coalition of athletes, co founded by Olympic speedskater Joey Cheek, committed to raising awareness about and bringing an end to the crisis in Darfur, Sudan whose government is supported by China. Cheek was denied a visa earlier in the week. As Cheek said in a NPR interview recently, "...unless you are prepared to actually live the ideals you are speaking of, you're going to run into friction." We admire Chris Boyles --one of America's top decathletes for the past 5 seasons (winner of 2005 MultiStars)—and his frustrating story is attached herein.

On a more happy note, University of Tennessee senior Jangy Addy, the 2008 SEC decathlon champion and NCAA runner-up, was named the Liberian Olympic team earlier this week. Booth his parents were born in the West African nation of Liberia, a nation as interesting historically as one can imagine. Modern Liberia was founded in 1822 by freed slaves from the United States. They were sent to Africa under the auspices of the American Colonization Society, a private organization whose purpose was "to promote and execute a plan for colonizing in Africa, with their own consent, the free people of color residing in the US."



Two of America's top decathletes had vastly different Olympic experiences. Chris Boyles (l) ended up not going to Beijing. Jangy Addy (r), was named to the Liberian team.

It's first president, Joseph J Roberts, was a freeborn Black from Virginia. Liberia's independence was first recognized by France and the UK in 1848 and by the USA (the Abraham Lincoln administration) in 1862. It's flag is almost identical to that of the US stars and stripes.

Even more notable, Addy was selected at the team's flag bearer in today's (August 8) opening ceremonies. Jangy's story is also attached.

### **U.S. decathlete Boyles: 'I have a responsibility right now to speak'**

By Amy Rosewater  
Special to ESPN.com

Updated: August 7, 2008, 10:57 AM ET

On Tuesday, Chris Boyles was angry and confused. The only times the 28-year-old U.S. decathlete could recall finding himself in trouble were when he stole a jawbreaker when he was a youngster and when he was caught speeding as a teenager. He couldn't believe either of those crimes would have put him on the Chinese government's no-visa list. On Wednesday, however, it all made sense. As Boyles watched the morning news, he heard a report that U.S. Olympic gold medalist speedskater Joey Cheek had his visa revoked by the Chinese government. That's when Boyles realized why his visa was revoked as well. Like Cheek, Boyles is part of Team Darfur, an athlete-driven group that has advocated for an Olympic truce and peace in Darfur, a war-torn region of Sudan. China has been attacked worldwide by various human-rights groups and advocacy organizations for supplying Sudan with weapons in exchange for oil and turning a blind eye to the genocide in Darfur.

"My emotions [Tuesday] are totally different than they are today," Boyles said in a telephone interview Wednesday. "Before, I was angry and confused. Now, I feel like I was put into the position. I feel like I have a responsibility right now to speak."



Is he angry now?

"No way," he said.

Unlike Cheek, who emerged as the U.S. Olympic Committee's sportsman of the year after he donated his Olympic prize money from the 2006 Games in Torino to help children in Darfur. Later, he co-founded Team Darfur. Boyles was not nearly as politically active. In fact, he didn't even join Team Darfur until this summer and was not a prominent member.

"A few months ago, Team Darfur started to round up people for this cause," Boyles said. "I didn't educate myself as much as I probably should've, but I thought it was a good cause." Boyles, who has struggled with an ankle injury, didn't qualify for the Beijing Games in the decathlon. The injury forced him to withdraw from last month's track and field Olympic trials.

He is, however, close friends with fellow decathlete Tom Pappas and Dr. Curt Draeger, who works with U.S. decathletes. Pappas and Draeger arranged for Boyles to go to Beijing as a guest. In fact, Boyles said Draeger had already paid for Boyles' plane ticket to China. Boyles had been responsible for getting his own tickets to events.

During his intended visit to China, Boyles had planned to meet with Cheek and other Team Darfur athletes. The two had talked about meeting there, and Boyles has a link to the Team Darfur Web site on his own Web page. Cheek, who was besieged with interview requests, was unavailable for comment Wednesday, according to Martha Heinemann Bixby, director of Team Darfur.

Cheek had been notified less than 24 hours before he was scheduled to fly to Beijing that his visa had been revoked. He had planned on flying to China on Wednesday. Cheek's agent, Patrick Quinn, told ESPN.com he did not think chances were good for Cheek's visa to be reinstated.

Cheek told ESPN.com last month he was surprised that he received a visa. He was not going to Beijing in an official Olympic capacity but planned to support Team Darfur athletes and seek an Olympic truce.

Boyles' ordeal has been a little bit longer and more bizarre, considering he has not been at the forefront of Team Darfur's efforts. On July 24, Boyles received a phone call saying his visa had been denied. After a bit of confusion, he was informed that his visa had been approved and he would receive travel information in the mail. Sure enough, a

couple of days later, he received his passport and visa. He was set to leave Aug. 14.

All was good.

Four days later, he was informed his visa was no longer valid. His travel agent advised him to go to the Chinese consulate's office in Washington to clear up the matter in person. Normally, this wouldn't have been too much of a hardship. Boyles lives in Winston-Salem, N.C., about a five-hour drive from the nation's capital.

Problem was, he was competing in the Thorpe Cup in Manhattan, Kan., when he found out his visa was invalid. So he flew back from Kansas to Winston-Salem on Monday at 5 a.m., then drove to his parents' home in central Pennsylvania. Fatigued from travel and competition, he drove to Washington on Tuesday. He spent virtually the entire day waiting, only to be told that nothing could be done.

"A woman at the Chinese consulate's office told me she couldn't tell me why," Boyles said.

So a frustrated Boyles decided he had given it his best shot, but Beijing just wouldn't be in the cards for him. The travel agency told Boyles that he was only the second person they had worked with in 20 years to have a visa denied by China.

Boyles e-mailed Cheek and told him about the visa problems and that they couldn't meet in Beijing.

"Then this morning, I saw the news about Joey and it all clicked," Boyles said. "I'm sure somehow we were linked."

When asked if he thought the visa rejections and revocations might dissuade other athletes from becoming involved in political causes in the future, Boyles admitted he wasn't sure how others would react.

"I don't know," he said. "I suppose it might, but I would hope it wouldn't."

According to Team Darfur's Heinemann Bixby, at the beginning of the summer, four athletes had requested that their names be

removed from the organization's Web site because they feared safety problems once they arrived in Beijing. Heinemann Bixby declined to name the athletes or which country or countries they represented, but acknowledged that their governing bodies had "gotten calls from the Chinese government, and they felt their athletes might be treated as troublemakers." Other than that, no other problems had arisen, Heinemann Bixby said. The Team Darfur Web site does list names of athlete supporters and members, but there also are generic listings such as "softball player" because some athletes did not want to be so public, Cheek told ESPN.com last month. Now there is a last-minute push by American leaders, including House speaker Nancy Pelosi and some within the Bush administration, to get Cheek's visa reinstated as well as visas for citizens such as Boyles. "I call on President Bush to secure the entry of Joey Cheek and other U.S. citizens who have been barred from attending the Olympics because of their beliefs, advocacy for the people in Darfur and human rights in China and Tibet," Pelosi said in a statement. "It is essential that President Bush show leadership in promoting democracy, freedom and human rights during his visit to China." President Bush has said he will attend the opening ceremonies.

Interestingly enough, the U.S. Olympic athletes selected Lopez Lomong, a refugee from Sudan and a track and field competitor, to be America's flag bearer during the opening ceremonies Friday night. Being voted as the flag bearer is one of the highest honors that can be bestowed on an Olympic athlete. Cheek was selected as the flag bearer for the closing ceremonies in Torino.

"It's clear that the athletes really care about this stuff," Heinemann Bixby said. "The thing to me is that so much effort has been made now in getting Joey a visa, but I think he'd rather try to secure peace in Darfur. More energy should be put into that."

As for Boyles, he'll try to piece everything together. He's still battling an ankle injury and trying to figure out his future as an Olympian, and he's now thrown into the fray as a political athlete.

"All you can do is shake your head," Boyles said. "It's just a different world over there." *Amy Rosewater, a freelance writer based in Baltimore and a frequent contributor to ESPN.com, balances motherhood and reporting, and says she has no chance of qualifying for the Olympics. Her two daughters are Katie (age 6) and Josie (4).*

It is unfortunate for DECA since Chris was going to be our Olympic decathlon correspondent in Beijing, emailing news and photos.

Now, for jangy's story:

## **ADDY Added to Liberian Team**

**Friday, August 1, 2008**

Former Tennessee track and field star Jangy Addy was selected to the Liberian Olympic team, the Liberia National Olympic Committee announced last week. Addy will represent his parents' home country in the decathlon, which is scheduled for August 21-22 in Beijing's National Stadium.

"I'm very excited and thankful for the opportunity to compete in the Olympic Games. The invitation was somewhat unexpected, and I will have to prepare quickly, but I look forward to competing later this month."

The Norcross, Ga., native is eligible to represent Liberia because he is a direct descendant of two Liberian citizens. He competed for the United States in the 2004 World Junior Championships but is allowed to compete for Liberia in Beijing because it has been more than three years since he last represented a country in international competition.



Not only was Addy named to the Liberian Olympic team, but he had the honor in carrying his nation's star and stripes in the 8/8/08 Opening Ceremonies.

Addy's best event is the 110m hurdles, where he set a collegiate decathlon record at the 2008 SEC Outdoor Championships. He also holds the world heptathlon record in the 60m hurdles, a mark he set at the 2008 SEC Indoor Championships.



Liberian flag

"Jangy had a great collegiate career at Tennessee and I'm excited he will have the opportunity to compete in Beijing," Tennessee track and field coach Bill Webb said. "He did a fantastic job this year despite battling various injuries. He has two weeks left to tune up, and I'm confident he will represent his family and their heritage with great pride."

Addy becomes the fifth former track and field Vol to make an Olympic team. Anthony Famiglietti (steeplechase), Tom Pappas (decathlon) and Leigh Smith (javelin) will compete for the United States. Gary Kikaya (400m) will represent the Democratic Republic of Congo.

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We will post the Olympic Games Media Guide and handbook for the decathlon (and women's heptathlon) in a few days. In the meantime I thought it would be interesting to compile some decathlon predictions for Beijing. I found lots of them and some were literally unbelievable. One predicted (and it would be nice, of course) for an American sweep led by Trey Hardee. Here is a list of a few:

**Predictions on Eve of Beijing Games**

|             | <b>gold</b> | <b>silver</b> | <b>bronze</b> |
|-------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| DECA        | Clay        | Krauchanka    | Karpov        |
| Claus Marek | Clay        | Krauchanka    | Karpov        |
| USA Today   | Clay        | Karpov        | Sebrle        |
| Wash Post   | Clay        | Sebrle        | Karpov        |
| SI          | Clay        | Smith         | Sebrle        |
| T&F News    | Clay        | Krauchanka    | Karpov        |
| Trackshark  | Clay        | Krauchanka    | Hardee        |