

THE DECATHLON ASSOCIATION

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EATON FLASHES TALENT

Pappas Tests Foot at Nike Meet

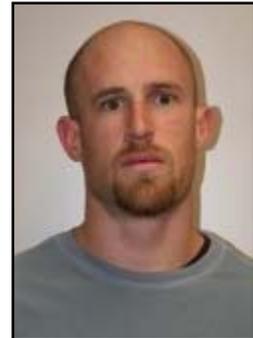
Hello Again.....Oregon's promising sophomore Ashton Eaton added more than 600 points to his PR by winning the small Nike Elite decathlon at Sacramento State University on March 27-28. This meet was overlooked in our last newsletter but was filled with such excellent marks that it deserved its own posting.

Eaton's 7792 score bested that of veteran Darius Draudvila by 70 digits in a meet that saw some helpful winds, especially on day one.

A field of 9 started at the Alex G. Spanos Sports Complex, site of the past two US Olympic T&F Trials.

Eaton, 20, became the first collegian to post an automatic NCAA Div I qualifying mark (standards are 7500 auto, 7000 provisional) and he did it with terrific races...10.82 100m, 47.00 400m, 14.21 110m hurdles and a sparkling 4:24.15, amassing 3590 points in the 4 running events, the best ever by a collegian and 2nd best ever by an American. Dan O'Brien ran for 3656 points at the '91 IAAF world championships in Tokyo with 10.41, 46.53, 13.94, 4:37.50.

Amazingly, Eaton won only the two longer races. Draudvila, a Lithuanian who still trains at Kansas State, his alma mater, captured the sprint in 10.73 while Tom Pappas, who competed in half of the events, won the hurdles in 14.09.



Oregon soph Ashton Eaton (upper left), Bend, OR, won the Nike Elite meet with an eye-opening 7792 PR, over Lithuanian vet Darius Draudvila, a standout formerly at Kansas State (7722). K-State's Adam Fretwell (lower left) posted an NCAA provisional mark of 7190 for 3rd while USA champion Tom Pappas came thru a 5 event test with flying colors. Below Eaton in high jump.



By the end of the first day it was obvious that the Oregon soph and the veteran Lithuanian, a day short of his 25th birthday, were both on a roll, as they were tied at 4215 points apiece.

Eaton had struggled during the first day of the recent NCAA indoor heptathlon, but recovered for a fine 2nd day and 6th overall. Here at Sac State, he and Draudvila waged a terrific battle and the lead changed hands after each 2nd day event. With an event remaining Draudvila led by 124 points, about 20 seconds on the 1500m tables.

The Bend, Oregon native then raced to a 15 second 1500m PR and his differential at the finish was nearly 31 seconds (4:24.15-4:55.00). Whew!

Almost lost amid the battle upfront was a fine 7190 effort (missing PR by 7 points) and NCAA provisional mark by Kansas State senior Adam Fretwell. And even more noteworthy was the testing effort by USA champion Tom Pappas, 31, now an assistant coach at Kansas State. Tom was testing his oft injured foot and did 5 events in fine style (10.93 100m, 16.11m/ 52-10¼ shot, 1.99m/6-6¼ high jump, 14.09 110m Hurdles and 47.62m/156-3 discus). Test passed!

After day one Dan Steele, the Ducks Associate Head Coach, remarked of his protégé, “Ashton was much more composed today, and it helps that this is a relaxed atmosphere and a low-key meet,” “He (long jump) jumped well and it’s nice to see more consistency. He’s capable of jumping 25 feet every time.

“We tried not to put too much emphasis on this meet and see if we might be able to get a qualifying mark. You really have to have the right frame of mind (in the decathlon) and he took a business-like approach. He had a great first day and



Dan Steele, the Oregon Associate head coach, guided Eaton through his NCAA qualifying and PR effort.

if he can have a good day tomorrow, we will really be pleased.”

Despite some windy conditions that also included occasional sprinkles, after day two Steele was delighted with the results “Ashton posted consistent performances across the board. On paper, we expected some big points from him but until you do it, you never know. I’m thrilled that he was able to get his qualifying mark out of the way because this now takes all the pressure off of him. He will be able to step back and work on improving all aspects of his events.”

