

THE DECATHLON ASSOCIATION

DECA Newsletter

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EATON'S 8241 CAPTURES NCAA Fayetteville Becomes PR City

Hello Again....Ashton Eaton's first goal at the NCAAs was to repeat as decathlon champion, becoming, in the process, only the 3rd to do so in the meet's 40 year history. The second goal, to score high, perhaps PR, is common to all decathletes.

It was obvious after just two events that, barring a complete breakdown, goal one was a given and Ashton would add his name to those of Rob Muzzio (1984-85) and Jake Arnold (2006-07) as back-to-back winners.

Yet Eaton was hardly the entire story of the 40th NCAA decathlon. A dozen decathletes achieved career bests scores here, an extraordinary total.

Since the decathlon is the most statistical of all sporting events, every coach, athlete and fan kept their eye on Ashton's point score. When he set a pair of meet records on day one and ran up the meet's best first day total everyone (including myself) went scurrying to the scoring tables to project his ultimate tally. This can be disappointing when things don't turn out as hoped and I am afraid many will leave this NCAA meet with that feeling.....that is, dwelling on what could have been. Don't bother. In the combined events world this only leads to ulcers and frustration. Yep, Ashton may have left a few points in the vault pit but his overall effort was a sight to behold.

Oregon junior Ashton Eaton, in spite of a subpar vault, became the 3rd back-to-back NCAA decathlon champ in Fayetteville.
[photo: Oregonian]



A PR Parade

A dozen decathletes achieved career best scores at the NCAA D-I meet in Fayetteville, with Tennessee's Michael Ayers showing the most improvement.

	New PR improvement	
Ashton Eaton/Oregon	8241	+119
Mateo Sossah/N Carolina	8044	+223
Michael Ayers/Tennessee	7784	+304
Lars Rise/Missouri	7776	+159
Bjorn Barrefors/Nebraska	7689	+241
Dan Keller/North Carolina	7631	+108
Dan Kinsey/Akron	7563	+118
Gray Horn/Florida	7490	+101
Marshall Ackley/Oregon	7470	+133
Kevin Dwyer/Miami (OH)	7453	+ 1
Philip Adam/Rice	7358	+ 27
Dan Newell/Liberty	7302	+ 47

When he opened day #2 with a 13.85 clocking in the 110m hurdles (a career best by .16 seconds) and then PR'd in the discus the

deca community expected a score in the neighborhood of the collegiate record. When that did not occur due to a vault snafu, some left McDonnell Field feeling let down. That's normal.

Yet what we saw in Fayetteville was one great decathlon led by the Oregon junior's 8241 score, a PR by 119 points.

We saw an athlete who has turned himself into the best decathlon runner in history (see box), one who has significantly improved in the throws (PR discus and near PRs in the shot and javelin), but one who needs a jumps tune-up to craft a really big total.



**40th NCAA Champs
U of Arkansas
Fayetteville, AR
June 10-11, 2009
Day Two**

110m Hurdles: [2:30 - 2:44 pm]

By mid-afternoon temps were in the mid-80s and it was breezy at John McDonnell track. Yet there were no crowds for the decathlon...approximately 450 in the stands at the event's start but many of those were left



When Eaton recorded a sporty 13.85 hurdles mark fans scurried to the scoring tables. Only Jangy Addy's '08 13.74 is faster in meet history.
[photo: NCAA]

over from Discus qualifying rounds.

The first (of 6 seeded sections) were the beneficiary of a nice tailing breeze (+2.0 mps) and 3 of 4 PR'd including the Big Sky champ, Nathan Capps/Idaho State (14.71).

Section #2 grouped the 4 fastest hurdlers. As the runners went to their mark the wind abruptly reversed direction and the hurdlers ran into a -1.3mps headwind. Eaton drew lane 4 and was smooth and quick over

the first 5 barriers while opening a significant lead. He clobbered the 8th hurdle but regained composure and ran it in. His margin over a field of good hurdlers was large and one knew you were watching something special. The time it took for the *FinishLynx* System to post the times on the north-end scoreboard was the longest 3 seconds of this meet and when 13.85 was posted the crowd of 450 buzzed. Wow! 13.85 was a huge PR and it was run into a headwind!

Akron's Dan Kinsey won the 3rd race, also run into a -1.3mps headwind, in 15.72. The wind then reversed again and Eaton's teammate, Marshall Ackley won in a PR 15.93.

Section #5 was unusual in that the entire field recorded lifetime bests led by tall Mateo Sossah's 14.62. When it became really breezy (+2.4mps) for the final race, again the entire field recorded lifetime bests led by Liberty's Dan Newell at 15.31.

Eaton's lead grew to an ungodly 312 points. Two other extraordinary facts surfaced about the hurdles event in Fayetteville. First 12 of the 22 athletes recorded career bests (and 4 others just missed), a remarkable percentage. Conditions were generally favorable and this is was one fast competition track.

Second, as occurred with the 4 sprint races and the four 400m races, these 6 hurdle races did not suffer a single false start, something abnormal for combined events. This was a first for the NCAA meet. And this observer cannot recall a major meet without a single false start. I'm unsure if this represents a new generation of conservative athletes. But it is surprising. When the latter fact was announced Nebraska's Skyler Reising quipped that he'd false start in the 1500m just to break the streak. He drew stern looks.

After Six: Eato 5361, Clev 5049, Otto 5023, Soss 5011.

Discus: [3:15 - 4:57 pm]

With two sections grouped according to past results Eaton found himself in Flight #1 with the lowers seeded throwers. He

opened with a PR 41.13m/134-11, posted a foul down the right sector line, then improved in round #3 to 41.79m/137-1. Two others, Tyler Clarke/Duke and Newell recorded lifetime bests. But Carolina's hot Dan Keller, who had recorded 4 lifetime individual bests, struggled sandwiching a 31.27m/102-7 between 2 fouls.

The weather got muggy and forecasts called for thunderstorms. Lars Rise and Dan Kinsey got the event rolling in round # 1 with 46.04m/151-0 and 45.96m/150-9 spins. Reising, who unfortunately had no marked in the long jump the day before, came up with a 10 foot PR in round #2, 46.33m/152-0 to win the event. Pat Woods also contributed a career best toss.

After Seven: Eato 6062, Soss 5725, Otto 5719, Clev 5689.

Pole Vault: [6:28 – 8:41 pm]

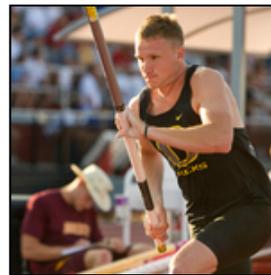
At the conclusion of the discus, with the expectation of an impending storm, the winds abruptly changed from south to north and the impending storm blew over. This was the real break everyone was hoping for. Conditions were optimal for vaulting but the wind change required officials to move both pits, which took 35 minutes to complete and it was 1½ hours after the discus before the vaulted got underway.

Inexplicably Eaton was switched from Flight #1 (better vaulters in the North pit) to Flight #2 (weaker vaulters in South pit). No explanation was given. "By the time I found out Ashton had already gotten his steps and taken a practice vault," said Oregon coach Dan Steele. "So we just left it as it was." In fact it had no impact on what happened to Ashton later in the event. What happened? "Ash had some really good practice attempts, one where got over a bungee set at 5.35m/17-6½. We had high expectations, said Steele."

Eaton opened at 4.10m/13-5¼ successfully, passed two bars before clearing 4.40m/14-5¼, in both cases skying high over the crossbar. But before he vaulted again 42 other attempts were recorded for his group

and it was nearly an hour later. Without the early rhythm he looked ragged and, in spite of flying well over, barely brushed the bar on the front or backside of 4.70m/15-5.

No one was more disappointed than Eaton himself who had set high expectation for himself here. And, after a pair of PRs in the previous two events, the 3 misses was doubly disappointing. His lead was pared to 255. Teammate Ackley then won the group at



Oregon's Marshall Ackley (left) PR'd at 4.80m/15-9 on the way to a PR score 7470. He began the season with a 6866 career best. North Carolina's Mateo Sossah (right) recorded an outdoor PR 4.60m/15-1 in Fayetteville, on the way to a PR 8044. He started the season with a 7516 best.



a PR 4.80m/15-9.

In Flight #1 (north pit) Tennessee's Michael Ayers and Keller tied for the victory at 5.00m/16-4¾ while Dan



Tennessee soph Michael Ayers (right) tied for the win in the vault at 5.00m/16-4¾ to move from 8th to 6th overall.

Kinsey tied a personal best 4.70m/15-5 and Pat Woods exceeded his at 4.50m/15-9. Four other were close to surpassing bests including Kansas State's Moritz Cleve who was fashioning another dependable effort.

What a break with the weather! The day before (3 hours) and the day after (2 hours) experienced delays due to severe thunderstorms.

86 clearances, 207 attempts at 13 different bars in 133 minutes.

After Eight: Eato 6793, Clev 6538, Soss 6515, Barr 6475.

Javelin: [9:14 – 10:30 pm]

By the time the javelin started three things occurred: darkness settled over John McDonnell Field, 10,000 meter finals for women and men were on tap, and most of the spectators had gone home. The few who stayed were either distance running or deca aficiandos.

Again Eaton, looking to make amends for the vault disappointment, was grouped with the weaker throwers. And again he responded by winning the group at 53.62m/175-11, just a foot off his PR. His throws were improving and no one was ever



Akron's Dan Kinsey (left) won the javelin on his last throw, 59.96m/196-8. He began the day in 19th place and ultimately finished 10th with a significant 7563 career best score.

better at decathlon running events.

Keller, Gray Horn and Reising all recorded PRs.

During Flight #2, and while Oregon's Galen Rupp was winning the men's 10k, Trinity Otto and Mateo Sossah were spearing lifetime bests and Kinsey was winning the event at 59.96m/196-8. At this point Kinsey and Keller, himself having recovered from his discus disappointment, had given themselves a chance to qualify for the USATF nationals (7550 points standard).

After Nine: Eato 7435, Soss 7236, Clev 7190, Ayer 7140.

1500 Meters: [11:00 – 11:05 pm]

The top half-dozen spots were virtually pre-determined by now and all of the

interest focused on the final scores. Of paramount concern were achieving lifetime bests, school records and qualifying marks (ala USATF, Euro u23). Virtually everyone in the field had 1500m marching orders to achieve one or more of the goals.

Officials cleverly ran a single race (all 22 athletes) so everyone would have plenty of company and there would be none of those embarrassing and extended gaps between runners that often produces criticism to the final event. This race was going to be exciting.

Predictably, after a bit of jostling, Northern Iowa's Mat Clark dashed to the lead. With prodigious 1500 skills, he had an opportunity for a top 8 placing if he could make up 123 points (approximately 18½ seconds) on Carolina's Dan Keller. Their PR differential was 24 seconds, so this was a distinct possibility.

Sossah (looking for his first 8K score), Notre Dame's Justin Schneider and Eaton filed in right behind and the pace was brisk...54 seconds at 300m (3 laps remaining). Schneider eventually dropped off and Eaton and Sossah battled for the rest of the race. Ashton would comment later "I was upset with the way I performed in the pole vault, I know I'm better than that. I tried to channel some of the frustration into the 1500. Sossah is a great runner, and he was close in the standings going into that final event so I knew I had to dig deep." And dig they did. At 700m Clark began to pull away with Keller, back in the pack, keeping a wary eye.

With a lap remaining Clark was 3:10, with Eaton and Sossah at 3:14. All three gunned it during the final 400m, Clark tied up and his final 50 meters was a chore yet he covered the last lap in 66 seconds. Final time, 4:16.96. Sossah and Eaton also ran 66 for the final lap with the Frenchman getting a step nod at the finish line, 4:20.50 to 4:20.75.

Meanwhile the field streamed in...Keller ran a 5 second PR, clocking



4:31.98 and the final Clark/Keller margin was 15 seconds. And Keller had his USA national qualifier (7631). Barely noticed was Akron's Dan Kinsey whose 8 second PR (at 4:38.93) gave him a qualifier by just 13 points (7563). Kevin Dwyer's 5:01.45 was a career best by 15 seconds. Whew! *After Ten: Eato 8421, Soss 8044, Clev 7937, Ayer 7794.*

Eaton now the Event's top Runner

Decathlon statisticians keep a bevy of records (no surprise there) and one of the most telling examines the most points scored for *groups of events*: running, jumping and throwing and some athletes live off their running, jumping or throwing forte. For example Tom Pappas was history's best jumper having leaped 7.96m/26-1½, 2.17m/7-1½ and 5.20m/17-¾, all in the same meet (2003 USATF in Palo Alto) and it netted him 2985 points, a *record*.

And Canadian Mike Smith was the event's best thrower having tossed 16.94m/55-7 (shot), 52.90m/173-7 (discus) and 71.22m/233-8 at the 1996 meeting in Götzis. That's worth 2748 points.

For a generation it's been well known that 2x Olympic champ Daley Thompson was the event's top *runner*. That is until this past weekend when Ashton Eaton put up 4 terrific marks to snatch the record away. That mark is now 3777 points. Here's a comparison.

	Daley Thompson/GBR European Champs Stuttgart 8/27-28/96		Ashton Eaton/USA NCAA Champs Fayetteville 6/10-11/09	
decathlon	8811		8241	
score:	mark	points	mark	points
100m	10.26	1032	10.35	1011
400m	47.02	957	46.85	966
110mH	14.04	969	13.85	994
1500m	4:26.16	770	4:20.75	806
Total	3728		3777	

Final Results:

6/11-12 40th NCAA Championships, U of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR

8241w	Eaton, Ashton/Oregon	10.35+4.1
	758+3.5 1257 199 46.85 13.85-1.3 4179 440 5362 4:20.75	
8044	Sossah, Mateo/UNC-FRA	11.31+2.8
	730+4.0 1363 208 49.19 14.62+0.4 4244 460 5888 4:20.50	
7937	Cleve, Moritz/Kansas St-GER	10.80+4.1
	722+2.6 1402 193 48.42 14.44-1.3 3879 480 5427 4:29.66	
7794w	Ayers, Michael/Tennessee	10.73+4.1
	736+1.9 1282 199 49.12 15.71+0.1 3836 500 5778 4:44.07	
7776	Rise, Lars/Missouri-NOR	11.09+2.7
	746+3.4 1594 172 49.99 15.23+0.1 4604 460 5889 4:42.24	
7689w	Barrefors, Bjorn/Nebraska-SWE	10.95+3.4
	740+4.8 1370 196 49.96 14.71-1.3 3853 490 4891 4:46.21	
7652w	Otto, Trinity/Texas A&M	10.66+4.1
	735+1.8 1393 190 48.94 14.71+0.4 4155 440 5510 5:03.76	
7631	Keller, Dan/UNC	11.29+2.8
	712+3.3 1399 202 50.40 15.13+0.1 3127 500 5621 4:31.98	
7608w	Clark, Mat/N Iowa	10.80+4.1
	731+3.4 1217 196 49.35 16.14-1.3 3897 440 5486 4:16.96	
7563	Kinsey, Dan/Akron	11.44+2.8
	683+2.0 1501 196 53.23 15.72-1.3 4596 470 5996 4:38.95	
7490	Horn, Gray/Florida	11.05+2.7
	732+2.7 1221 202 50.52 14.74+2.0 3754 450 4639 4:32.84	
7470	Ackley, Marshall/Oregon	11.01+2.7
	680+3.4 1228 184 48.33 14.93+0.1 3720 480 5127 4:29.72	
7453	Dwyer, Kevin/Miami (OH)	11.13+3.4
	720+2.6 1315 202 51.94 15.08+2.0 4111 470 5329 5:01.45	
7358	Adam, Philip/Rice	10.98+2.7
	688+4.6 1432 193 49.79 15.81-1.3 3843 450 4640 4:34.85	
7316	Woods, Patrick/Ohio St	11.21+2.8
	675+3.5 1402 202 52.30 14.86+0.4 4256 450 4766 4:55.64	
7302w	Newell, Dan/Liberty	10.74+4.1
	657+3.8 1323 190 48.87 15.31+2.4 3615 440 4913 4:36.53	
7294	McGinnis, RJ/Minnesota	11.09+3.4
	699+3.4 1454 205 52.37 14.77+2.0 4108 430 4073 4:52.84	
7285	Clarke, Tyler/Duke	11.06+3.4
	665+3.5 1310 199 50.01 14.80+0.4 3438 460 4342 4:34.10	
7255w	Roberts, Cory/SE Louisiana	11.06+3.4
	678+4.5 1189 178 49.35 14.90-1.3 3708 440 5650 4:35.59	
7248w	Schneider, Justin/Notre Dame	11.27+2.8
	669+4.3 1260 199 50.03 15.51+2.4 3297 470 4615 4:22.70	
7075w	Capps, Nathan/Idaho St	11.22+2.8
	640+4.8 1153 190 50.84 14.71+2.0 4013 420 5253 4:41.85	
6574	Reising, Skyler/Nebraska	11.00+2.7
	nm 1493 193 51.38 16.12+2.4 4633 450 5238 5:03.63	
dnf	Kosk, Meelis/BYU-EST	11.50+3.4
	616+3.9 1235 181 withdrew	
dnf	Derzanic, Rok/Kansas St-SLO	10.96+4.1
	699+3.5 withdrew	
dnf	Moss, Miller/Clemson	11.55+2.7 withdrew
	25s,22f	

