

THE DECATHLON ASSOCIATION

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GRAY HORN LEADS 1st DAY at NCAAs Cato, Beach Lurking in Boise

Hello Again..... Seasoned Gray Horn, 22, a University of Florida senior from Wapakoneta, OH holds the first day lead at the 9th NCAA I heptathlon title meet over an outstanding field. The 3x SEC indoor champ posted 3357 point score as six scored 3299 points (compared with but two at the IAAF world champs being held earlier in the day in Istanbul) for the initial four events. Although there will be no world record at this meet as there was two years ago when Ashton Eaton removed Dan O'Brien's name from the record books, the depth here, nevertheless, is the best ever.

Off the form charts Horn will have no easy task to replace Clemson's Miller Moss as the NCAA's indoor champion of versatility. Boise State senior Kurt Felix is 2nd at 3344,

Duke junior Curtis Beach recorded 2 career bests, and another CE best and finds himself just 107 points back (in 8th place). And don't overlook the Arkansas pair of Gunnar Nixon and Kevin Lazas. Imagine...the meet is so close that only 107 points separate 1 thru 8.

And keep an eye on fast improving Wisconsin soph Jay Cato, who finds himself in 3rd overall at 3333. He possesses big time hurdle and vault skills. So, with a maximum crowd of 268, here is what happened at Jacksons Track at the Idaho center in Nampa, Idaho.



SEC champion Gray Horn (above) leaped into the NCAA D-I heptathlon lead Nampa, ID, but ACC champ Curtis beach and Big 10 champ Jay Cato had big first days.

9th NCAA D I National Indoor Heptathlon Idaho Center-Jackson Boise State U. Nampa, ID March 9-10, 2012



60 meters: [10-10:05 am]

The seeded section was run first (?) with speedy Mantas Silkauskas/Kansas St lined up in lane 7. As the 3rd fastest collegian ever in this meet, he went in as the heavy favorite although a trio of others had dipped under 7 seconds during the season. Yet the Lithuanian senior was never headed here and his PR and eye-opening 6.73 startled the 114 spectators. Consider that this was actually faster than Ashton Eaton had run in Istanbul earlier in the day. Isaac Murphy also posted a career best (6.92 seconds) and 4(!) others were within .04 seconds of PRs. Georgia's tall Cory Holman was 3rd in 6.97 seconds. This is one quick straight.



In the 2nd race a pair of former prep standouts (Gunnar Nixon/Arkansas freshman and Curtis beach/Duke junior) lined up side-by-side in lanes 5 and 6 and battled stride for stride. Beach edged ahead at 45 meters and finished with a lifetime best 7.03 clocking, while Nixon (7.09) also PR's. In fact five of the 8 man field ran or equaled lifetime best sprint marks. The field house record was broken or tied 3 times. This meet was off and *runnin'*.

After One: Silk 980, Murp 911, Holm 893Horn 882,

Long Jump: [10:41-11:11 am]

Unlike previous NCAA meets, the CEers found the bouncy raised runway to their liking. In the past, raised runways had led to numerous foot faults at the toe-board (nearly 50%). Not so here.

In Flight # 1 (East pit) Holman started things off with a nifty 7.42m/24-4 ¼ leap and Cato quickly followed with a PR 7.56m/24-9¾ effort. Horn then covered 7.60m/24-11½ of Idaho real estate and Arkansas junior Kevin Lazas answered with a PR 7.45m/25-5 ½ bound. *Jumpin Broncos!*

Kurt Felix blasted a 7.64m/25- ¾ winner in round #2 and Cato improved again in round #3 managing 7.61m/24-11¾.

Beach dominated Flight # 2 (West pit) getting a huge 7.52m/24-8¼ PR. Texas Swede Petter Olson also recorded a lifetime best 7.13m/23-4 ¾ effort. Although there were soe big fouls (Silkauskas, Nixon) the jumping was universally good.

After Two: Silk 1883, Horn 1842, Cato 1816, Beac 1812.

Shot Put: [11:45 am-12:06 pm]

The athletes were seeded into two groups and the circles were contested concurrently at the west end of the facility.

Although there were no 15 meter throwers, again, given the ability level, the competition and marks were universally good. In flight #1 both Holman and Beach scared career bests, the latter getting 12.62m/41-5.

Flight #2 was captured by Nebraska Swede Björn Barrefors, a senior, who added a

foot and one half to his lifetime best and moved into contention. Dan Gorris, a senior at Northern Iowa, and Horn also PR'd, the latter getting 13.88m/45-6½ to move into first place. Lazas, Nixon and Olson all just missed career marks.

After Three: Horn 2563, Laza 2538, Silk 2517, Barr 2501.

High Jump: [12:49-1:58 pm]

The event moved with alacrity as the crowd swelled to 268 (we count 'em and that total does not include the 63 red-shirted officials on the infield). There were no career marks but virtually the entire field posted solid scores here. In Flight #2 (South pit) Stocky Dave Grzesiak/Wisconsin, won the pit at 2.02m.6-7½ .

In Flight #1 (North pit) Beach and Horn, jumping back-to-back, both had several close misses at 2.02m/6-7½ but settled for 1.99m/6-6¼. The possible 56 point swing, one way or the other, would be significant on day two as both were seen as gold medal contenders. Felix, Holman and Cato all negotiated 2.08m/6-9¾ but none were able to tie Ashton Eaton meet record of 2.11m/6-11. All had opportunities to surpass Horn leading total here but could not and the event ended quickly.

So efficient were officials that the 16 jumpers took 138 attempts in just 69 minutes, or an attempt every 30 seconds on average. That is very fast!

After Four: Horn 3357, Feli 3344, Cato 3333, Holm 3311.

1st Day Results:

3/9-10 NCAA Indoor Champs, Jackson Center, Nampa,

ID		
3357	Horn, Gray/Florida	7.00 760 1388 199
3344	Felix, Kurt/Boise St-GRN	7.17 764 1307 208
3333	Cato, Jahpeth/Wisconsin	7.08 761 1254 208
3311	Holman, Cory/Georgia	6.97 742 1231 208
3305	Lazas, Kevin/Arkansas	7.03 745 1426 196
3299	Nixon, Gunnar/Arkansas	7.09 736 1350 205
3268	Barrefors, Björn/Nebraska-SWE	7.10 729 1470 196
3250	Beach, Curtis/Duke	7.03 752 1262 199
3231	Silkauskas, Mantas/Kansas St-LTH	6.73 737 1245 190
3185	Martin, Romain /Texas-Arlington-FRA	

7.11 716 1300 202
3165 Olson, Petter/Texas-SWE 7.06 713 1340 196
3023 Murphy, Isaac/Texas 6.92 712 1245 181
2988 Gooris, Dan/N Iowa 7.31 661 1436 193
2939 Gresziak, Dave/Wisconsin 7.44 659 1300 202
2933 Staven, Asa/Montana St 7.19 676 1223 193
2908 Nilsson, Marcus /UCLA-SWE 7.34 687 1308 187

Notes:

Gray Horn noted that his knee was a bit gimpy today and he was disappointed with his high jump but happy with his long jump. "If it was perfect world, we'd all have perfect scores. I just want to come in here tomorrow and do what I normally do and help my team (the favorite Florida Gators) win. This is my 3rd year under coach Holloway and I'm more consistent. I'm more mature. And I still have a shot at six."