

THE DECATHLON ASSOCIATION

DECA Newsletter

Volume XXXVII

Number 44

July (1), 2012

NIXON is WORLD JUNIOR CHAMP

Ties Resolved



Hello Again... American decathletes won a pair of age-related internationals during the second week of July. Arkansas frosh Gunnar Nixon came from behind in the final event in Barcelona, to become the first American to capture the IAAF World Junior crown. And Minnesota junior Jack Szmanda became the NACAC u 23 winner in Guanajuato, Mexico. This newsletter offers coverage and results of both meets. Perhaps I should have prepared this newsletter in Spanish.

And we provide an answer to the anomaly in the IAAF/USATF rules on how to break decathlon ties.



IAAF World Junior Champs Barcelona, ESP July 10-11, 2011

Arkansas frosh Gunnar Nixon, whose 7892 5th place score at the NAAs was the best ever by an American junior using international senior implements, grabbed the other half of the AR with the highest score ever with international junior tools. His dramatic and come from behind win in Barcelona over 22 others provided the red-white-blue with their first gold medal at the World Junior meet.

Day One

At the afternoon break Nixon found himself in 7th place, 168 points out of the lead held by Jake Stein of Australia. His 2.10m/6-10 $\frac{3}{4}$ high jump win to open the evening session pulled him to 3rd place, now just 30 points behind Stein. Gunnar than blasted 49.13



Gunnar Nixon, 19, Edmond, OK, became the first American to win the IAAF World Junior decathlon title.

in the 3rd 400m section as he and Dutch teenager Tim Decker both dropped Stein to 3rd. Nixon led Decker, 4164-4154.

For Georgia freshman Garrett Scantling, day one proved disastrous. He was doing well enough, standing 12th after four events. But a DQ in the first section of the 400m ruined the Bulldog football star's chance of a medal.

Day Two

In the 3rd section of the hurdles (39') Nixon drew the inside lane (2) as Decker, a 13.92 seasonal performer won handedly in 14.02 with Nixon in 3rd at 14.54. Nixon had regained the lead during the discus but relinquished to Stein (who won all three throes in Barcelona) during the javelin and found himself, down 86 points to the Aussie. Needing a 14 second margin, and with a PR of just over 4:30 in the 1500m, Nixon followed leader Lukas Schmitz of Germany thru splits of 66 and 2:22. Karl Robert Saluri/EST took

over and led at 1200m at 3:36 before Nixon jumped him and sprinted to a huge lead. Let him describe it: “The best part was the last 100 meters (of the 1,500) because I knew I had the space I needed ahead of the Australian fellow,” Nixon said. “I almost came into tears the last 20 meters because I knew I had won it. No lows, no bad events in this meet. I’m so happy. I can’t explain this feeling. Words can’t



It was heads up for Gunnar Nixon/Arkansas (left) and heads down for SEC competitor Garrett Scantling/Georgia (right) at IAAF Junior Champs in Barcelona.

even describe. I feel so lucky. I feel blessed just to be here and be able to compete.” His final 300m was covered in 45 seconds and the final clocking was significant PR, 4:22.36. His final tally, 8018, broke the previous AR of 8016 set a year ago by Arkansas teammate Kevin Lazas at the USA junior meet in Eugene.

During the course of the two-day competition, Nixon established an overall personal best in the 1,500 meters and junior-implement bests in the shot put (14.54m/47-8.5) and discus (42.23m/138-6). In addition to a smaller shot put and discus, competitors in the junior decathlon also use shorter hurdles. Nixon’s gold is the first of the week for Team USA.

Resultados:

7/10-11 IAAF World Junior Champs, Barcelona, SEP

8018 Nixon, Gunnar/USA-Arkansas 11.23-0.1 712-0.2
1454 210 49.13 14.54-0.7 4223 450 5625 4:22.36
4164/3854, American Record (w Jr implements: old mark
8016, Kevin Lazas/Arkansas, 2011)
7951 Stein, Jake/AUS 11.31-0.8 741+1.1 1639
195 51.15 14.90-0.7 5143 380 6961 4:46.05

7815	Dekker, Tim/NED	11.06-0.8	723+0.4	1468	204 49.70 14.02-0.7 4369 420 4804 4:34.34
7588	Dubler, Cedric/AUS	11.05-0.8	747+0.5	1235	207 49.70 14.62-0.7 3615 450 5059 4:45.35
7583	Saluri, Karl Robert/EST	11.04+0.3	721+0.2	1420	183 49.60 15.51-0.4 3930 450 5580 4:26.69
7513	Gonzalez, Manuel/CUB	11.48+0.3	723+0.9	1478	201 52.26 15.07-0.4 3768 430 5589 4:29.44
7498	Gado, Ruben/FRA	11.10-0.8	731+0.5	1242	174 49.21 14.92-0.4 3954 470 5040 4:24.00
7444	Schmitz, Lukas/GER	11.00-0.8	734-0.7	1275	186 47.73 14.96-0.1 3693 440 4653 4:35.38
7356	Nowak, Tim/GER	11.31-0.1	670-0.7	1489	198 50.81 14.87-0.1 4257 380 5385 4:39.36
7302	Di Tizio, Luca/SUI	11.42+0.3	702+0.7	1188	195 51.03 15.00-0.1 3658 450 5411 4:31.47
7280	Dos Santos, Felipe/BRA	11.07+0.3	706+1.0	1444	186 50.38 14.70-0.4 4127 380 4952 4:43.75
7264	Broeders, Arne/BEL	11.58-0.1	696+2.2	1337	183 51.37 15.48-0.4 4002 450 5762 4:35.45
7233	Larrinaga, Abdel Kader/CUB	11.20-0.1	708+0.9	1393	201 51.00 14.58-0.7 3700 350 5041 4L37.60
7209	Sedlak, Vaclav/CZE	11.13-0.1	673+0.2	1399	192 50.08 14.09-0.7 3734 420 3916 4:39.98
7132	Kopach, Aleh/BLR	11.51-0.1	688+0.7	1224	201 49.87 15.21-0.1 3591 430 4451 4:32.85
7055	Braun, Peter/NED	11.28-0.8	725+1.4	1547	195 50.60 14.69-0.7 4424 nh 5551 4:35.51
7050	Leemet, Markus/EST	11.09+0.3	687 0.0	1265	180 49.80 15.14-0.1 3883 390 4990 4:40.32
7017	Turner, James/CAN	11.33+0.3	687-0.1	1253	186 49.90 15.58-0.4 4216 350 5054 4:30.83
6994	Dodig, Dino/SRB	11.49-0.8	688-1.3	1202	198 50.31 15.23-0.1 3826 380 4466 4:30.97
6937	Urena, Jorge/ESP	11.54-0.1	676+1.7	1158	192 51.79 14.58-0.7 3556 410 4864 4:36.68
6690	Gföhler, Benjamin/SUI	11.00-0.8	738+0.4	1268	180 50.20 15.68-0.1 3848 380 4115 5:25.79
dnf	Hassi, Juuso/FIN	11.21+0.3	701 0.0	1353	186 50.31 dsq 4486
dnf	Scantling, Garrett/USA-Georgia	11.35-0.1	661+1.2		1447 201 dq withdrew [3077 pts] 23s,21f.

NACAC u 23 Champs Guanajuato, Mexico July 7-8, 2012



Minnesota’s Jack Szmanda (left), a junior from Wausau, WI outlasted 2011

NCAA D-II champ Brent Vogel/Central Missouri (right) at the NACAC u 23 meet in Guanajuato, Mexico, 7061 to 6927 in a small field with minimal competition. Both will return to the collegiate ranks in 2013. Szmanda will be the Big 10 favorite (2nd this year with 7862 score) while Vogel, who red-shirted in 2012, posted a 7519 effort in June and will be the D-II favorite.

	51.23	15.81	3972	490	4906	5:21.64		
6927	Vogel, Brent/USA-C Missouri		11.33	647	1244	191		
	49.71	15.01	3763	430	4653	4:36.19		
6448	Moura, Gustavo G./Mexico		10.83	654	1138	188		
	51.63	16.53	3312	370	4706	5:03.44		
6262	Cruz, O/ Republic		11.20	677	1096	185		
	52.55	15.75	3391	355	4533	5:19.55		
6109	Vasquez, Juan V/Mexico		11.24	650	762	191		
	50.94	15.57	3147	415	3635	5:21.57		
dnf	Cedeno, Martin/Republic		11.31	nm	1161	164		
dnr,	withdrew						6s,5f,	-----

Resultados:



7/7-8 NACAC u 23 Champs, Guanajuato, Mexico
7061 Szmanda, Jack/USA-Minn 11.22 670 1367 191

TIES

To answer the question about decathlon ties posed in the last Newsletter... allow me to remind the reader that I proposed a hypothetical situation in which two decathletes finished with identical scores. I then asked who would win the decathlon using current tie-breaker rules?



Let's say that two athletes have identical scores of 7786 points.

	Decathlete A		Decathlete B	
100m:	10.96	870	10.90	883
LJ:	7.45m	922	7.44m	920
SP:	13.24m	682	13.25m	682
HJ:	1.90m	714	1.87m	687
400m	49.44	841	49.91	819
110mH:	14.45	917	14.38	926
Disc:	42.15m	708	42.11m	708
PV:	4.40m	731	4.50m	760
Jav:	55.57m	671	55.51m	671
1500m:	4:32.16	730	4:32.31	730
Score:		7786		7786

*The answer as to who wins is.....*it depends. It depends upon which rulebook is used. For the majority of USA decathlons, conducted as part of collegiate track and field meets and using NCAA rules, the meet ends in a tie. The NCAA does not break ties for first or any other place in the competition. If, for instance, the NCAA championship meet ended in a tie for first place, both athletes would receive the first place medals and the athletes would split the 18 team points, 9 apiece. (Section 2, Article 8)

For non-collegiate meets, the IAAF and USATF rulebooks apply. In the case of identical scores the first tie breaking rule applies:

“In case of a tie the winner shall be the competitor scoring the greater number of points in a majority of events.”

This is called the ‘head-to-head’ rule. The *wording* of this rule finds that a tie continues since competitor A wins 3 events, B wins three events and they have the same number of points in the remaining four events. That is, the score is 3-3-4 and the tie continues. One must then go to the second tie-breaker rule:

“if the tie still continues the winner shall be the competitor scoring the greatest number of points in any one of the events.”

It further states:

“if the tie remains, the winner is the competitor with the highest number of points in a second event, etc.”

An so, given this rule, the winner of this hypothetical situation is competitor B whose 926 points for the pole vault is the highest single scoring event.

But it is possible to demonstrate, under the first rule, that two athletes could have identical scores and that one of the athlete could win 8 events and still loose under the IAAF tie-breaker rule. This does not make sense to me. In the example above competitor A actually wins six of the ten events but loses to B because of the *wording* of the rule. Instead of focusing on head-to-head performances/victories (column one above), the rule focuses on the points scored (column 2 above).

There would not be a problem if there was a discreet score for each possible performance. But, of course, that would only be the case if the scoring tables were carried out in fractions. For example a 400m time of 48.88 seconds and 48.90 seconds are treated identically under the tie-breaking rule since both marks are given 867 points. Only in decathlon circles can a 48.88 and a 48.90 be considered identical. Examples in the 400m, discus, shot put, javelin and 1500m abound. For example, a discus mark of 36.88m and 36.84m are considered the same under the decathlon tie-breaking rule. This makes little sense to me. A discus throw of 121-0 and 120-10 are not the same. They are close but that is not a tie. In open competition they would not be considered a tie. Under decathlon rules they would. How about another example? Nowhere but in decathlon tie-breaking rules would 1500 meters performances of 4:39.97 and 4.40.12 (both earn 680 points) be considered identical marks. For me, this makes little sense.

My belief is that, as they are commonly reported, the rule should focus on head-to-head performances, not scores. A generation ago, my effort to explain this anomaly to an IAAF rules committee member fell on uncomprehending ears. He was simply unable to comprehend the issue. My belief is that the wording of the rule should be changed but I’ve not lost sleep over this issue and have rarely thought about it. After all, the chances that this would ever become an issue is about the same as, say, a pair of sprinters racing to an identical tie at the US Olympic Trials women’s 200 meter trials for the 3rd spot on the Olympic team.

I realize we are splitting hairs here, but as the recent 200 meter race in Eugene illustrated, a tied decathlon score could result in athlete A being a winner under one wording of the rule and athlete B declared the winner under another wording. I just ask myself what is the intent of the rule and what is the fairest wording. In a situation in which little is palpable the answer is obvious to me. The head-to-head ruling should focus on performances, not points. To me that’s common sense

I *do not* recommend:

- a) that the entire decathlon or any part of it be re-contested

b) that the winner be determined by a coin toss.

I *do* recommend that the rule be slightly reworded to focus on performance and not points as the first tie-breaker. I just do not want to be caught short as USATF officials were in Eugene without an *acceptable* tie-breaking procedure.

I had any number of email responses to my last Newsletter. Sweden's ATFS expert Rooney Magnusson reminds us that using a "toss of the coin" was a common way of settling ties in the USA as early as the early days of the 20th century. His favorite "tie" situation, however, was a 1918 Finnish championship 5000m race where both athletes ran identical 15:38.1 clockings and they could not be separated at the finish line. So a re-run was ordered. The re-race almost resulted in yet another tie, with only 2 meters separating the runners who, by this time, had covered 10,000 meters!

Some situations are just naturally complicated. Be ready.