

EATON WINS JESSE OWENS AWARD Marra is Coach of the Year



Hello Again...although the awards were not unexpected the dynamic duo of decathlete Ashton Eaton and his coach Harry Marra, both of the Oregon elite Track Club, picked up some additional accolades this week from USATF. In fact, it was a sweep. On Tuesday Eaton was announced as the annual Jesse Owens Award winner, emblematic of the nation's top track and field athlete. The award, which was first offered in 1981 in the name of legendary Jesse Owens, the quadruple gold medal winner at the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games, has had two previous decathlon honorees: 2003-World champion Tom Pappas and in 2008-Olympic champ Bryan Clay.

On Thursday Marra was named the Nike Coach-of-the-Year. Their stories are intertwined. Eaton placed his name in the record books in 2012 with a near perfect season. Indoors he won the USA national long jump title and then bettered his own world heptathlon record (6664 points) while winning the World Indoor championship.

He competed in just two decathlons outdoor, but oh my, were they memorable! In a rain-soaked two days in Eugene, OR he won the USA Olympic Trials In June with a new world record , 9039 points, getting world best marks in the 100m and long jump to boot, and set a PR 1500m to erase Roman Sebrle's name from atop the world record list. A month later he captured the decathlon gold medal at the London Olympic Games (8869 points). Along the way he posted PRs in all three throws, and



Coach (Marra) and athlete (Eaton) celebrate a new world decathlon record at the US Olympic Trials in Eugene.

ran 13.34 for 110m hurdles and 45.68 for the 400m in open competition. Whew! Some season.

Eaton's continued improvement can be traced to his Oregon-e TC coach Harry Marra, 65, who was awarded USATF's highest coaching accolade. Both will be honored at the annual Hall of Fame Banquet at the USATF national convention in Daytona, Beach, FL in



Coach Marra, Oregon elite Track Club, is the national coach-of-the-year.

early December.

Marra, who merited a BS in English at Mount St. Mary's College, MD and a masters in Physical Education at Syracuse University, earned his Ph.D. (Philosopher in Handling Decathletes) diploma on hundreds of playing fields over the past 40 years.



In a scene that has now become commonplace in USA decathlon circles, Coach Marra (right) offers advice to Ashton Eaton (left). The result: one Olympic gold medal and a world record outdoors; one world championship and three world records indoors.

“Coach Marra’s passion for the sport... goes beyond what he does for the athletes on the track,” said USATF CEO Max Siegel. “He is a person who truly gives back and works to grow our sport. It was great to see him and the athletes he coaches enjoy the unprecedented success they achieved this year.”

Marra, known for his meticulous attention to detail and preparation, was the subject on additional accolades: “Coach Marra has proven to be a true athlete-centered coach,” said NIKE VP for Sports Marketing John Capriotti. “His ability to get his athletes to perform at their peak level speaks to his technical expertise and also his ability to work as a partner to the athlete to break new barriers. He has been among the best in the world for years and will continue to be for years to come.”

Marra spent ten years as T&F coach at San Francisco State U, and then founded the VISA national decathlon program and served

as its national coach for the decade of the 1990s. Among his top multi-event athletes are: Brianne Theissen, the NCAA heptathlon champion; Brian Brophy; Bart Goodell, Chris Wilcox; Paul Foxson; Sheldon Blockburger and Paul Terek.

Marra and wife Madeline live in Eugene, Oregon.

