

# THE DECATHLON ASSOCIATION

## DECA Newsletter

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## USA SNAPS STREAK at THORPE CUP Filip Holds Off Williams' Late Charge



**Hello Again....** From a weather standpoint day two appeared ominous. A thunderstorm moved into the area but failed to cool off a hot American team. After the storm passed thru Team USA got back to work and soon pushed their margin over 1,300 points. The team battle was over. Any margin greater than 800 allows the leading team to experience a zero somewhere (e.g. a vault 'nh') and still hold sway. As the weather improved so did US fortunes and the only doubt revolved around the individual winner.

First day leader Scott Filip (21, Urbandale, IL) just did hold off the challenge of Harrison Williams (20, Memphis) as the decision went down to the final 1500m lap. It was, in the growing darkness of Northwest Arkansas, quite exciting.

Teamwise, the Americans poured it on notching the first 5(!) individual places, a meet first. The 5 man average of 7769 was a solid piece of work and the winning margin (>1,400 points) was the 8th biggest. Coaches Steve Rainbolt (Wichita State) and Ed Fye (Doane College) deserve much of the credit in getting Team USA ready. If anything struck observers it was that American team members dug deep....every time one turned around there were clutch efforts (e.g. 3rd attempt clearances). Whew!

I'm unsure there is any way to statistically capture this (but you know I'll try). Consider this. Of the 70 USA marks (7 athletes x 10 events) more than half (37!) were either career bests or approached same.



Scott Filip, 21, Urbandale, IL won the 23rd version of the Thorpe Cup (USA vs Germany team decathlon) in Fayetteville, AR.

(e.g. within .1 seconds in 100, 1 meter in discus, etc---what I call NPRs---*near PRs*). Seven each by Filip, Brondyke and Modin!

In Fayetteville everyone competed! They gave what they had, a fact appreciated by the coaches, onlookers and USATF reps. No, the totals might not hold up against much stronger USA or German teams, but when athletes come up with their best efforts, who can complain? The concern about those who had been less committed to this Thorpe Cup opportunity abated in light of this team's effort.

That is the nature of the Thorpe Cup.....like a good book that goes thru 23 editions, the 23rd Thorpe Cup was a helluva meet. Here's what happened,



**23rd Thorpe Cup  
USA vs Germany  
University of Arkansas  
Fayetteville, AR  
July 29-30, 2016**

**DAY TWO**

**110m Hurdles:** [4:01 – 4:06 pm]

A summer storm brought rain, lightning and thunder to the Fayetteville area at 1:30 pm and meet officials pushed the start time back to 4 pm. The rain stopped mostly by 3 pm and over 250 were in attendance for the start of day two.....a terrific total considering the weather. Many pitched in to 'squigi' the track. Temps were in the mid-70s with little humidity.....the storm had cooled things off and blown most of the humidity and hot air eastward.

In the first race Kale Wolken banged to 3rd hurdle taking him out of contention and Scott Filip scooted by and maintained his margin to the tape clocking a significant PR, 14.92 seconds. He was on a roll. Teenager Marvin Bollinger got a career best in 3rd. Wolken had a hard time recovering and finished with a disappointing 15.67 clocking. Aiding wind, +1.3mps.

<i>pl</i>	<i>name</i>	<i>nation</i>	<i>lane</i>	<i>time</i>	<i>points</i>
1	Filip	USA	3	14.92pr	859
2	Hutterer	GER	6	15.16	830
3	Bollinger	GER	2	15.21pr	824
4	Hepperle	GER	4	15.33	810
5	Stauss	GER	8	15.51	789
6	Bahner	USA	7	15.56	783
7	Wolken	USA	5	15.67	770

Section two provided as close a finish as one could image as Harrison Williams, Solomon Simmons and Mitch Modin ran stride for stride for 9 barriers. After the tenth



Filip outleans Germany's Marvin Bollinger in the 110m hurdles at the 2016 Thorpe Cup. The Rice junior's 14.92 clocking was one of 7 career or near career best individual marks.

hurdle they were dead even and Williams won the run in over Modin 14.35 to 14.36 with Simmons another 2/100ths back. Aiding wind +1.9mps. Modin's clocking was a PR by 2/10ths! Wow! Kurtis Brondyke also clocked a career best, 14.69 for 6th.

The smart races in section 2 reduced Filip's overall lead to 116 points.

<i>pl</i>	<i>name</i>	<i>nation</i>	<i>lane</i>	<i>time</i>	<i>points</i>
1	Williams	USA	6	14.35	930
2	Modin	USA	2	14.36pr	929
3	Simmons	USA	4	14.38	926
4	Merten	GER	5	14.49	912
5	Scherfose	GER	3	14.66	891
6	Brondyke	USA	8	14.69pr	887
7	Nowak	GER	7	15.14	833

After Six: Fili 5157, Modi 5041, Will 4958, Simm 4941.

**Discus:** [4:46 – 5:27 pm]

The event was delayed until towels were found to dry out the throwing circle, time that ate into the allowed warmups.... perhaps the only officiating snafu. Round #1 was notable for its conservatism ...athletes making sure they produced a legal mark, something common in team meets. Only one foul. Germany's Nils Merten won the event immediately with a 45.38m/148-11 effort. Modin and teenage Marvin Bollinger both claimed marginal career bests in round #3. Filip just missed a PR with a 39.47m/129-6, but it was enough to keep him in the overall lead.



Germany's elder statesmen Rene Stauff, who had been 3rd overall in the past 2 Thorpe Cups, expected more than a 6th place 42.84m/140-7.

After Seven: Fili 5811, Modi 5680, Simm 5621, Will 5594,

**Pole Vault:** [6:19 - 7:56 pm]

The hallmark of this meet (and this event) was that no one produced a zero, no nh's. And there were pleasant surprises. In Group #2 (north pit) Bollinger and Simmons won the pit with PR's, 4.75m/15-7 for each. The latter has made considerable progress in the last 12 months.

In Group #1 (south pit) Harrison Williams exorcised a vault demon ('nh' at the Trials) when he cleared 4.55m/1



Harrison Williams celebrates a decathlon PR vault of 5.25m/17-2¾ to win the Thorpe Cup vault. The performance was particularly sweet after a 'nh' at the Olympic Trails. He took a pair of unsuccessful tries at a meet record 5.35m/17-6½

4-11. Then, in precision like fashion he negotiated (at times with impressive clearances)

4.75m	15-7
4.85m	15-11
4.95m	16-2¾
5.05m	16-6¾
5.15m	16-10¾
5.25m	17-2¾.---a deca PR by a ton!

At this he had taken 10 vaults, He took two attempts at a PR and meet record 5.35m/17-6 ½ before calling it a day. The impressive display moved him to 2nd behind Filip who himself managed a solid 4.75m/15-7. But his



Eastern Michigan's Solomon Simmons impressed with three 3rd attempt clearances, the latter a PR 4.75m/15-7.

leading margin had been shaved to 63 points.

A well-managed event with...16 settings, 121 attempts and 50 clearances in 97 minutes. Attendance was at a high point here with 290 spectators (many on lounge chairs placed on the track and infield), making total meet attendance (there was no admission fee) 710, surely a domestic meet record itself. The credit for this goes to meet director Travis Geopfert.

After Eight: Filp 6645, Will 6582, Modi 6484, Simm 6455.

**Javelin:** [8:30 - 9:01 pm]

From a performance standpoint this was the meet's weakest event...only two throws (out of 42 efforts) over 60 meters (both by winner Kurtis Brondyke.. at 61.22m/200-10). In fact this is a national decathlon Achilles heel.

In round #1 Filip tossed just 41.67m /136-8 and, for the only time during the meet he dropped from the top of the leaderboard. In fact he dropped to 5th and Williams held the

lead. Filip was out of the lead for exactly 12 minutes. But he recovered in round #2 with a 48.33m/158-3 toss. Modin moved to 2nd and Simmons 3rd.

The team battle had long been settled with the hosts 1299 points up.

*After Nine: Fili 7209, Modi 7184, Simm 7155, Will 7135.*

**1500 Meters:** [9:36- 9:41 pm]

At this point four (!!) had a shot to win the individual title, a highly unusual situation. Filip, Modin, Simmons and Williams (who had the top 1.5k PR) were all in the hunt as just 74 points separated the quartet. And they all went for the win. Williams jumped to the front immediately and passed 400m in 71+ and 800m in 2:26+. Simmons and Modin eventually fell off the peloton but Filip hung tough.

The magic number was 12 seconds... anything more and Stanford soph was a winner, anything less and Rice junior claimed the crown. At 1000 meters Williams held an 11 second lead over Filip. Both tried to pick it up on the final lap. Williams, who had set the pace for 1400m had little left on the home straight when Felix Hepperle rushed by. Filip dug deep and closed the gap to 10 seconds, then 9, and then 8. The finish was, in a word, dramatic and Filip edged Williams by just 27 points. Close finishes are not unusual at this meet. At the very first affair in 1993 in Aachen Kip Janvrin (who was in attendance here) was nipped by just 9 points. In nine cases the margin of victory has been 60 points or less. This is, after all, the Thorpe Cup.

After Williams finished in 4:34.70 Team USA streamed in expanding their margin to over 1400 points. The 6 year losing streak was officially history.

*After Ten: Fili 7876, Will 7849, Simm 7756, Bron 7695.*

**Summary:** Consider: a group competitive youngsters, a veteran (Brondyke) who provided leadership plus a pair of focused veteran coaches had achieved what six previous groups had not...brought the Thorpe Cup home. Gone was the concern about the

missing 8000 pointers....from a competitive standpoint, they were not missed here. Forget that Team Zehnkampf was not as strong as expected. Yes, they brought a young team and two of the established stars underperformed.

What proved to be more important was the selection of a USA team willing to prepare and give their best. This was a proud moment for USA decathlon fortunes. Enough said.

No small part played by the immaculate Arkansas facilities and the host (read Travis Geopfert) preparation....2018.

A laudatory comment: The final star of this meet was Roger Jennings who ran the **Flash Results** system on the wonderful Razorback north scoreboard. Jennings wrote a program that allowed spectators to view simultaneous results of concurrent events and the immediate adjustment to total scores and places. The scoreboard was divided into quadrants with men's results on top left (for



The Arkansas scoreboard at John McDonnell Field (top) and Roger Jennings (left) of *Flash Results* were Thorpe Cup stars providing up-to-date data.

simultaneous pits/circles), women's results on the top right; men's cumulative scores & places (kept up to date by the second!) on the bottom left and women's cumulative results and places on the bottom right. Occasionally Jennings would display overall event results,

but the 4 quadrant display provided everything any spectator might want to know about what was going on. A neophyte fan might have wandered onto McDonnell Field and concluded that CEs were easy to follow. I don't think that's ever happened before. Well done.

Any further improvements in this technology and they'll be no need for a PA announcer! Yikes!



**Results:**

**7/29-30 23rd Thorpe Cup (USA vs GER), U of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR**

7876	Filip, Scott/USA- Rice U'18	10.63+1.1
757+1.2	1388 202 49.07 14.92+1.3 3947 475 4833 4:42.18	
7849	Williams, Harrison/USA- Stanford'18	10.81+1.1
669-1.4	1327 196 47.51 14.35+1.9 3860 525 4759 4:34.70	
7756	Simmons, Solomon/USA- E Mich'16	10.75+1.1
693-3.8	1540 181 49.21 14.38+1.9 4074 475 5746 4:52.87	
7695	Brondyke, Kurtis/USA-TOG	11.07+1.2
691-0.5	1496 202 50.85 14.69+1.9 4236 435 6122 4:52.87	
7669	Modin, Mitch/USA/Oregon'17	10.72+1.2
710+0.9	1344 199 48.99 14.36+1.9 3875 465 5751 5:13.45	
7614	Nowak, Tim/GER-SSV Ulm 1846	11.16+1.1
698-2.6	1414 193 50.25 15.14+1.9 4156 475 5433 4:39.40	
7593	Bahner, Austin/USA-ShockerTC	10.74+1.1
720-1.8	1540 181 49.21 15.56+1.3 4383 485 5329 4:51.35	
7576	Scherfose, Patrick/GER-LG Weserbergland	11.06+1.1
699+1.0	1442 190 51.49 14.66+1.9 4326 505 4969 4:58.04	
7528	Stauss, Rene/GER-LAV Tübingen	11.19+1.2
710+1.9	1418 199 51.54 15.51+1.3 4284 455 5731 4:51.39	
7380	Hepperle, Felix/GER-LG Neckar-Enz	10.92+1.2
657-1.3	1229 190 48.80 15.33+1.3 3681 485 4924 4:32.50	
7361	Wolken, Kale/USA-Doane'16	11.05+1.2
688-0.8	1343 184 49.56 15.67+1.3 4314 445 5428 4:46.87	
7329	Merten, Nils/GER-LAV Tübingen	10.82+1.1
666-1.7	1474 187 50.74 14.49+1.9 4538 435 5027 5:18.90	
7324	Hutterer, Dennis/GER-AMC Darmstadt	10.99+1.2
668+1.7	1285 208 52.65 15.16+1.3 4394 445 5051 4:57.81	
7163	Bollinger, Marvin/GER- LG LAZ Saar	11.09+1.2
671-1.5	1227 199 51.53 15.21+1.3 3827 475 4696 4:56.00	
	14s,14f	

**Team Scores:**

	<b>USA</b>	<b>Germany</b>	<b>differential</b>
After: 1 event	4,608	4,330	+278
2 events	8,798	8,186	+612
3 events	12,477	11,848	+529
4 events	16,212	15,607	+551
5 events	20,475	19,434	+1,041
6 events	25,006	23,689	+1,317
7 events	28,328	27,358	+970
8 events	32,511	31,655	+856
9 events	35,777	34,478	+1,299
10 events	38,845	37,427	+1,418
Average:	7769+	7485+	



2014 IAAF World Junior bronze medalist Tim Nowak/Ulm, Germany was the top Team Zehnkampf finisher, 6th at 7614 points.