

Doug Logan

by Sieg Lindstrom

Doug Logan just marked the first anniversary of his hiring as CEO of USA Track & Field. The Cuban-born Vietnam vet, whose name was unfamiliar to most in the sport when he took the helm, had served as President and CEO of Major League Soccer in its first four seasons, owned a Continental Basketball Association franchise in '96—a venture that folded two months into its first season—and worked for many years as a concert promoter.

"The opportunity to play a meaningful role in a second [major sport] was irresistible," said Logan when he came aboard.

T&FN checked in with Logan for his take on the year past and his aims for the future.

His answer to our first question, "Any surprises in the first year?" was, "No."

Before taking the job, he had tapped knowledgeable friends and pored through 52lbs of research material—weighed, Logan explained, when he later mailed it off to Mike McNees, his recent hire as USATF's COO. From there our conversation took shape:

Logan: So I really knew what I was getting into. [In the past year] I've had a wealth of education not only about where the sport is today but where it's come from. I've developed

some really good relationships with many of the people who've been involved with the sport for many, many years. But basically the vision which I had a year ago is still the one I

KIRBY LEE/IMAGE OF SPORT



As reported last month, Logan and Oregon head Vin Lananna had "constructive conversations" at the Nationals

have today. Only maybe the paths to get there have been altered a little bit.

T&FN: What do you want to accomplish?

Logan: My vision is a very clear one for me but sometimes I have difficulty articulating it. That is to bring the sport to its rightful place in American life in a wide variety of areas.

No. 1, from the standpoint of competition: to take our athletes and put them in the best possible position to be able to go out and compete and to win;

To do it on a commercial basis to extract the right amount of money from the marketplace so we can use those resources to make ourselves better;

To professionalize the organization from top to bottom so that it is more responsive and acts more like an efficient

business.

I think, without being overly critical, that we've gotten by for a good number of years. We've gotten by on our talent, for example. People point to past Olympics and past World Championships and say, We've gotten X number of medals, or using other metrics, that we got a half-dozen World Records in the last three years, or whatever it may be.

I think that we've just gotten by on talent. So part of what I'm all about is to organize this, to develop strategies for how this sport can thrive in the 21st century, do it in a logical

way and then bring additional resources to bear to make sure that everybody is thinking about excellence and not just "good enough."

T&FN: Did you come in with any reservations about running a federation that governs and supports both top-end elite professional athletes and a grassroots membership?

Logan: Yeah, it's a challenge, but not one that hasn't been met by others in the past.

When I came on board here, it's fair to say that at least from the governance standpoint what we had was relatively autonomous volunteer committees and elements from the membership that were making decisions that ultimately they were unaccountable for.

The Board of Directors either did not take onto itself the accountability or these autonomous bodies out there just assumed it. So there's a bit of herding that was and is required for ultimately taking that responsibility and putting it in the proper place.

For example, we have been involved in a couple of lawsuits the past couple of years... very costly lawsuits where the organization and its insurance carrier ultimately had to

U.S. TV Needs European Lessons

Doug Logan is not a big fan of the U.S. version of track television coverage:

"Our quality has [declined] to the point where audiences are accepting stuff that is really very mediocre.

"Certainly the raw material is out there and there are some glimmers of bright spots, but I think the way we approach it... and then take a look at the television presentation of a European meet or listen to the BBC and it's like night and day.

"I think this is one of these sports in which we can take some lessons from what's going on across the pond. We're in the process of accumulating tapes and going through them and seeing the things that take the life of the meet and the energy and stick it through the television tube.

"We're going to start looking at what others do and perhaps take our television partners and point them in a different direction and say, 'Hey, this is what we're looking for.' "

make a payment to someone who sued us for the negligence of the actions of a volunteer group that conducted a meet.

That meet was conducted under a governance model where that volunteer group wasn't accountable to anybody. They were running it under the name USATF; they were making all the decisions with regard to length of runway for a pole vault and other kinds of decisions that may have had the ability for someone to act negligently.

We as a governing body had no power or authority to tell that volunteer group, "No, you must make the runway 600-feet instead of 47feet," and ultimately we ended up making the payment on the lawsuit—a seven-figure payment.

At the end of the day, good, prudent business practices say that those who have the ultimate responsibility should have the ability to control their own destiny. And in that particular instance it wasn't there.

I will give you a second example. [At the USATF Championships], the Men's Track & Field Committee, which has some elements of self-autonomy, and the Women's Track & Field Committee, which has got some self-autonomy, created two different standards for entry into the meet.

They insisted upon that control. An artificial A-standard was created for the men, which had some very low thresholds. The women went with more classical A- and B-standards, which were a little more rigorous.

The ultimate result was that far more men qualified for the meet than women, which in today's day and age—an age of Title IX and an age of equality—put us in the position of having to answer the question, "Why more men than women?"

T&FN: *Inequality is inequality, but arguably the men got the short end of the stick in that some of the men's fields were too large.*

Logan: You're absolutely right. So if the ultimate responsibility of conducting these competitions is vested in us corporately but we don't have the ability to say, "Hey, these are the standards," then there's something gone awry in terms of how we govern ourselves...

I can tell you that the incidents I have related to you [like the Nicole Bush saga in the

steeplechase] are only a couple in a litany that I have experienced in the course of this first year. My move toward making this organization accountable is to eliminate incidents like that, which occur throughout this organization and come largely as a consequence of these autonomous committees that are able to make these decisions on their own.

Ultimately, I answer to a Board of Directors, and they're entitled to have me as their Chief Executive Officer run this company in the proper way.

T&FN: *How much further restructuring will be required to change this, and when can it be accomplished?*

Logan: I described it the other day as that we're in the fourth hour of a five-hour surgery. The last piece has to do with properly ascribing

to someone or something. I will give you an example.

At the present time there are committees that are charged with the selection of National Team coaches. There is nowhere in our governing legislation that says that after a National Team coach is selected he or she is accountable to anyone. They got selected by a committee and that committee moves aside.

So if a coach were to, heaven forbid, commit an indiscretion that would lead to an international incident or perhaps jeopardize a young man or woman that they are charged with, no one has the ability to blow the whistle and say, "I'm bringing this man or woman home." That to me is unconscionable.

There has to be accountability, and ultimately that accountability is going to run *through* me, *not to* me, to this new Board of Directors.

That is going to require that our governance—our bylaws and our manual of regulations—is changed. That, quite honestly, is going to be the last of the changes that is going to be necessary.

I will tell you that we are going to accomplish this change and it will occur by the end of this year. I think the membership in general will feel more comfortable once they are educated with regard to what this means specifically.

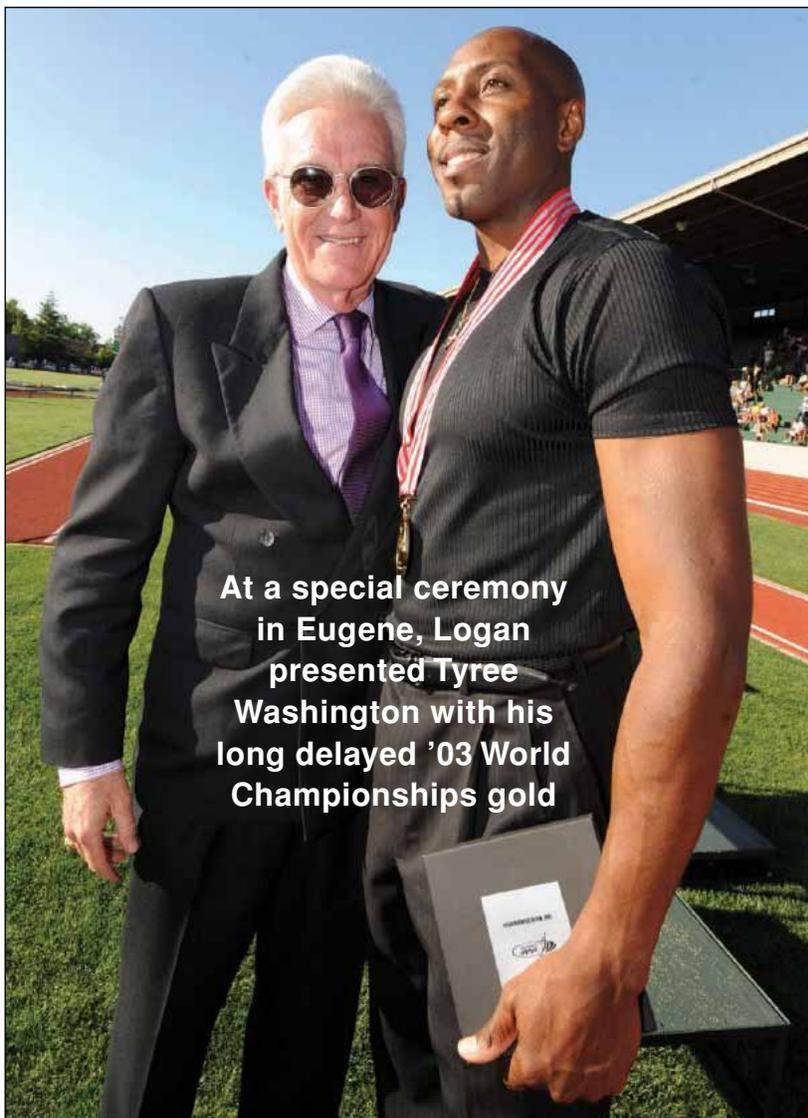
Much of the membership has not been aware of these things, and I think they'd be appalled to know some of it.

We're going to shine some daylight on it, we're going to show reasonable ways in which these problems can be resolved, we're going to get them adopted and we're going to take our rightful place as a smooth-running organization in search of excellence.

T&FN: *Readers won't see this interview until after the World Championships so they'll be reading with hindsight. Still, I think it's reasonable to ask if you've been able to do anything of practical significance to make the Berlin coaching staff more accountable?*

Logan: The coach selection for the World Championships for this year took place before I was hired. I am very comfortable after discussions with the coaches that we've got a good coaching staff.

They were not selected by this office but nonetheless I am comfortable that we have coaches who understand what we want and



At a special ceremony in Eugene, Logan presented Tyree Washington with his long delayed '03 World Championships gold

KIRBY LEEMAGE OF SPORT

ing to these autonomous membership-based pockets their proper role.

We have an incredible amount of individuals with, A—expertise, B—passion, C—desire to devote time to the sport, and I don't want to thwart that in any way.

All that I'm saying is that ultimately in what they do there has to be accountability

Logan Interview

understand their responsibilities leading up to and in Berlin.

I will tell you that by the time Daegu [2011 Worlds] rolls around, the methodology of the selection of the managerial and coaching staffs for our international teams will have changed.

T&FN: *The most visible goal of Project 30 is 30 medals at the '12 Olympics. Do you expect to see progress toward that in the Berlin medal count?*

Logan: I'll answer that in a couple of different ways. One, I just personally thought we were going to have a down year. I thought following on the heels of the Olympics it would be a down year, and it hasn't been that way at all with regard to performances.

I think we've had some individual performances that have been spectacular in the course of this year and I think that we're taking a very competitive team over to Berlin. I'm very optimistic about that.

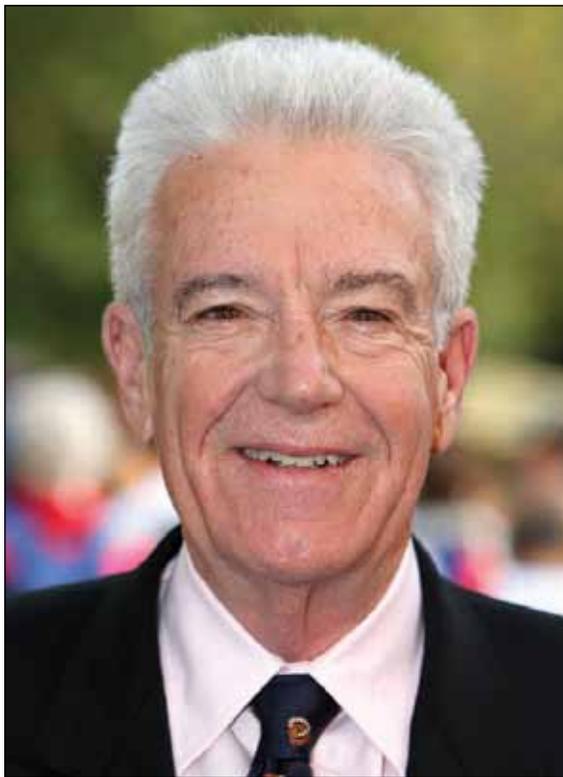
No. 2, just looking at the Project 30 recommendations, I think that we have put in place six of them but for them to take on the full value of the changes that we've made I think that it's probably still a little too soon. Like Barack Obama with his stimulus; I think it's a much longer project than just a couple of months. So that has not been felt.

I would tell you if I had a goal or expectation with regard to number of medals in Berlin but I actually don't. It's the first World Championships that I've gone through so I'm still learning about the whole dynamics—the entering of a number of people and then a wild card for defending champions and everything else.

I think we'll do as well as we did in Beijing, whatever that means. But I don't have a medal number ascribed to it. By the time Korea comes around I think you'll hear me talking a little differently with regard to specific goals because

I think that institutions really need to have those. If you don't reach for the moon, you'll never get off the ground and I think we ought to have those numerical goals.

Certainly we've set one for 2012, which is, I think, aggressive but reachable, and I think before too long we certainly will for the World



Medal goals: "If you don't reach for the moon, you'll never get off the ground."

Championships in Korea.

T&FN: *A big part of earning our sport its deserved place in the marketplace is presentation as sports entertainment with broad appeal. Can you cite any presentation highs and/or lows in the meets with which USATF was involved this year?*

Logan: It's interesting you ask that question. We had a staff-based strategy meeting this

morning with regard to how we can present these events better, and I'm not at all satisfied with the way we're doing it right now.

We're talking about some radical departures and I don't want to talk specifics right now because we've got a wide variety of things that we're looking at. But particularly on television we don't showcase our events well and there are a lot of events that we are putting on that can be made a whole lot more patron-friendly.

The low point for this year, hands down, has got to be the Carson meet. The Carson meet was horrible. The meet director knows that and everybody knows that and we've got to figure out a way for that not to happen again.

T&FN: *What in particular bothered you?*

Logan: Well, first of all, if you're going to have a meet and only a couple thousand people attend, you might as well have it in a television studio. The attendance was way off even though it was a gorgeous day in L.A. So it was not promoted well.

The sequence of events, the officiating was poor, we had hurdles misplaced, a questionable false start call. There was no rhythm, there was no continuity, there was no energy to the event even though a lot of really good athletes competed. As an event goes, it was one that I want to erase from my memory.

High points: I think as a meet Prefontaine was terrific. It's got everything you'd want. I like the two-and-a-half-hour format. Great energy to it, great performances. I

thought that that was the high point from the standpoint of a single-day meet.

And I thought the Championships were pretty good. So if you say that we finished with a bit of a bang with Prefontaine and the Championships, I think we did pretty well there.

I'm not at all satisfied. This year was more watching and learning and seeing what we've got and trying a few things around the edges. I think you're going to see us make some incremental steps next year in the way that we showcase the sport.

T&FN: *Any "wrap-up" observations on your first year?*

Logan: I have seen a lot and done a lot in this first year. We've taken some steps in the right direction but we've got a long way to go yet. But the final thing that I would tell you is that, if anything, I am more enthusiastic about this opportunity to serve as steward of this sport than I was a year ago.

I am delighted to have this job and the only thing that I can promise those in the sport is that they'll get 110% of my passions and my industry and my enthusiasms.

I'm here for a long ride. □

The Coaching Brain-Drain

T&FN asked Doug Logan about the loss of coaching guru Dan Pfaff to Great Britain (see p. 40) at a time when new USATF Performance Chief Benita Fitzgerald-Moseley has targeted field event development as a high priority for USATF:

"Dan was working for the USOC; he was not working for USATF. In Europe they have shadow governments and when a party is out of power it has a shadow Foreign Minister, a shadow this, a shadow that.

"I jokingly refer to the USOC's track & field staff as shadow USATF. That came as a consequence of the USOC taking over a significant portion of the autonomy we had at Chula Vista a couple years ago.

"We're in the process of remedying that. We have a draft of a very different relationship that we are contemplating right now that will bring that whole track training camp into our fold with the USOC's blessing.

"I will tell you that Dan and I had several discussions. I asked him to sit tight; we were going to make a decision with regard to what we were going to do. There was a bit of ambiguity and chaos with what was happening there and he got made this offer and went ahead and took it, and we wish him God bless and good speed.

"You have my assurances that we will—particularly in the technical areas where we think we have a significant amount of upside—make sure we have the best training locations, the best coaches, and the best opportunities on a go-forward basis to be able to medal."