



from the editor

E. Garry Hill

IF THERE'S AN EDITION THAT DEFINES THE EXISTENCE OF *T&FN*, it's this one, with our famous World Rankings. Clearly the year's most popular issue with the readership, it's also the one that's the most fun to produce at this end. Make no mistake, the staff enjoys watching the analysis of each event unfold as much as the most rabid of fans does.

Ultimately, the World Rankings belong to you, the readers

It's also the event which causes us the greatest amount of headache, because no matter what kind of strange math you try to use, there's no counting system that provides for more than one No. 1. Of course, there's no shortage of people who disagree with many of the choices.

Athletes feel they've been shortchanged, and their whole support group—family, agents, sponsors—feels they've been short-

changed. There has been unhappiness with the Rankings from day one, of course, but the griping has become more serious in recent years because there are sponsors who have tied recompense to placement in the Rankings. We're flattered that our efforts are regarded so highly, and that recognition has spurred us to treat the Rankings process with even more reverence. To do everything possible to get it "right," even though we know that no system imaginable is without flaws.

But we're willing to suffer the slings and arrows of those who take issue with the Rankings because, ultimately, they belong to you, the readers. They were invented long before they became part of the sport's professionalization, and they were invented to entertain and enlighten our readership. We plan on their continuing to do so for many years to come.

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RANDOM THOUGHTS as the exciting 2001 campaign winds down:

• Alan Webb is the most exciting—and maybe the best—thing to happen to U.S. track & field in years and years and years. I truly believe he has the potential to almost single-handedly raise the profile of the sport back into national consciousness. Having said that, I'm aghast that USATF would place him on the ballot for this year's Jesse Owens Award, as the year's "outstanding" athlete. His nomination is an affront to every international-class performer who made an impact on the world stage.

• While I'm slamming USATF, there are also rumors of one of the worst ideas to come down the pike in many a year: folding the Junior Championships into the main Nationals. What a great plan—make an already too bulky meet even bulkier and stage events which will take away the spotlight from some of the nation's best elite athletes. The big question is, who pays for the airfare (or added housing?) when an expanded midweek meet takes away cheap Saturday-night-stay airfares?

• If they want to improve the Nationals, instead of adding events, remove some. Specifically, the multis, which would get better play as a separate meet, and would also allow for a much smoother regular meet. As it is, crowded into the regular four days, they create terrible scheduling problems and make the meet too long. Athletes of all stripes would be better served if the two areas were separated.

• Worst technological "improvement" at a meet which had no shortage of tech glitches: the smokeless "gun" at the World Championships. No smoke, no flash; nothing to tell coaches, fans and journalists when the gun was fired, so the taking of splits became terribly compromised. What were they thinking?

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