



# from the editor

*E. Gary Hill*

THIS COLUMN IS SUPPOSED TO GIVE YOU some “secrets” for enhancing your meet-going experience, but if you’re reading *Track & Field News* you’ve obviously already achieved nirvana, so what’s possibly left to tell you? (Insert smiley face here.)

Seriously, while most of us do think of track & field as an entertainment as good as it gets, why not consider ways to make it even better?

Here, in no particular order, are 10 ways—some perhaps obvious, some off the wall—to increase your enjoyment of the sport:

## 10 ways to increase your enjoyment of the sport

1. Don’t sit close to the track. Sitting down close, even at the finish line—just like center court or the 50-yard line—is way overrated. If you really want to watch races develop, or follow the field events, sit high up. Even consider sitting on the backstretch, near the 1500 start. That’s an amazing vantage point, drawing the cognoscenti.

2. Think of the sport as field & track. Unskilled announcers and poor visual aids make this a tough one, but if you can, learn

to enjoy the ebb and flow of the jumps and throws. How? Chart the event yourself, if the data is available.

3. Bring a non-fan to the meet. Not only will you have the chance to create new followers, you can also boost your ego by being expert-for-a-day. Cultivate your kids, if you’re of an age.

4. Join a rotisserie league. “Owning” athletes is a real kick in the pants (and sometimes in the head). If you’re interested, mail me and I’ll see what I can do about getting you into an existing game, or starting a new one.

5. Volunteer to work a meet. The sport gives lots to you; give something back, even if it’s just raking the pit. Better yet, think about becoming an official, a commodity we’re woefully short on in most places.

6. Combine going to meets with tourism. No matter where you live, or how little time you have, there are always things worth stopping to see.

7. Visit both ends of the spectrum. If you like high school track, with all its purity and unfettered emotion, step all the way up to an NCAA or USATF Championships. Be blown away by the athletic talent those at the top end exhibit. Conversely, if you’re jaded by years on the GP Circuit, go and watch an elementary-school field day. The sight of those uncoordinated little critters giving their all will bring tears to your eyes.

8. Forget you’re a *T&FN* reader when you watch track on TV. This is not a slam at TV, because they really do try hard. But they’re pitching the sport at a wide demographic, one that’s not remotely track savvy. Be thankful for what you get and revel in the fact that you understand the sport better than 99.99% of the populace.

9. Go out to dinner with other fans after a meet. If you enjoyed the meet the first time round, you’ll enjoy it even more when you rehash a race, or fight over what strategy might have helped Runner A beat Runner B. Do debates: did Aleen Bailey really false-start out of the NCAA 100 semis? Was LSU’s baton pass out of the zone?

10. Scribble in your program, and keep it. This is your own permanent record of the meet. Pull the program out days/weeks/months/years later and relive that great 100 when you read, “Jones 10.54, Smith 10.55, Johnson 10.55.” The corollary to this, of course, is the First Commandment: Never throw away a copy of *T&FN*!

*(If you have some secrets of your own to share, please pass them on to me and we’ll try to print them in a future issue.)*