



from the editor

E. Garry Hill

THIS MONTH'S \$64,000 QUESTION is easy to frame. Of all the problems facing USATF, to which should new head Max Siegel give his top priority? I say he should ignore myriad factions all seeking to improve their small piece of the pie. From where I sit he needs to see the realllllly big picture and focus on that. But I'm guessing that my analysis of what a take-charge CEO should be doing in that regard isn't exactly on his radar.

Which problem should USATF's new CEO Max Siegel tackle first?

I realize that Siegel is a high-powered marketing executive, but if there's one term that has, IMHO, been overworked in the last few years, "marketing" is it.

To too many fans out there, better "marketing" is all that's needed to make our sport one of the most popular on

the planet. For no end of reasons, that's just not going to happen. And for Siegel and USATF to attempt to make it so is a fool's errand.

What I want Siegel to do is far different. And, unfortunately, perhaps far more difficult. I want him/USATF to go up against no less a foe than the U.S. government (and as a secondary target, the USOC). It made a bit of sense back in '78, when the nation's Olympic sports were blessed with the "Amateur Sports Act," which put USATF (TAC at the time) in charge of all things trackish, and with the USOC as the dutiful chaperone.

Thus we have a sport whereby the CEO not only has to be concerned with how some of the world's best pros are going to be nurtured, he also has to worry about age-group track as well, from pre-pubescent school kids to their (great) grandparents in their dotage. This is a sports/business model which makes no sense at all. Does Roger Goodell worry about Pop Warner football? Does Bud Selig fret over the Little League World Series?

Nor should Max Siegel have to care about anything but the pros.

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KUDOS TO THE EUROPEAN AA for adopting a plan I've long lobbied for. At this June's European Championships, the meet itself will not be interrupted by a single trip to the podium. Instead—mirroring a protocol that has been used in the Winter Olympics, among other things—the medals will be presented outside the stadium in a separate program after the competition is over.

Wow! What a concept! Actually allowing field-event athletes to do their thing without being in a preparatory position on the runway only to have a fanfare blast and the officials tell them, "Oh, never mind, we'll get back to you."

The reductio ad absurdum was the '88 Olympic vault, in which it took 14 men 5:50 to do just 7 heights, in no small part because the route to the podium crossed over the runway. For his part, as we reported at the time, Rodion Gataullin "angrily forced workers to remove the victory-ceremony carpet they had laid across the runway as he was preparing to jump."

Having announced dozens of VCs to virtually empty stadia at the OG and WC over the last couple of decades, I think it's far past time for a new era in presentation.

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