



# from the editor

*E. Garry Hill*

I'VE HEARD SAVVY EUROPEANS CALL IT "The greatest meet on the planet." These are people who get the Diamond League Circuit on home turf every summer, but to them, nothing can touch the every-4-years spectacle that is the U.S. Olympic Trials. And if they can, they come here to experience it firsthand, especially in Eugene.

**The greatest meet on the planet? Not the OG, not the WC—it's still the OT**

Yes, it's a close call—what kind of moron could say anything is better than the Olympic Games or the World Championships?—but all things considered I too am in the OT-is-best camp.

*(Does this train of thought sound familiar? That's because this column is basically lifted in toto from the July '08 issue; what was true then is only truer now.)*

If you ask me what the greatest meet I've ever seen is, Munich '72 is a hands-down winner, but then, I'm not sure I've met many fans who didn't vote for their first Olympics as No. 1. Like your first love, she's in your heart forever. And for a No. 2, I'd have to go with my—and everybody else's—first World Championships, Helsinki '83.

But as an ongoing sequence, give me the Olympic Trials, even if some reduced rounds and the moving of the hammer have thinned the program a bit too much on some days.

The Olympics are big and overbloated, with track not getting nearly enough love (and getting less with each progressive Olympiad). Of course it's an affair I wouldn't miss; it's an E-ticket, but I wouldn't want to stand in line too long. The World Championships is much more appealing than the Games is, what with there being nothing but track, but for me it shares a fatal flaw with the Olympics.

It's that cursed by-nation restriction on entries: the are-you-kidding-me 3 per sovereign state. That's like having an international battle of the bands and learning that Britain has to pick three from amongst The Beatles, The Stones, The Who, The Floyds, The Dire Straits, The Kinks... Meanwhile, every rocky outcropping that's barely above water in the Pacific gets to send somebody as well. No thanks.

But the Trials. Ahh, a true meritocracy. If you're citius/altius/fortius enough, you get in. No only-3 from California, just-3 from Texas... Strap 'em on, step out into the street and slap leather no matter where you're from. A week-plus of non-stop excitement with so much riding on so many of the competitions. When I think of how I skipped the '72 edition (cited by many as the greatest of all OTs) I wanna cry.

On the T&FN online forums we have lively debates from time to time. Me and my ilk, extolling the virtues of the long, drawn-out nature of the OT, on one side; the we-want-it-short-and-sweet Euro Circuit guys on the other. I'm frequently reminded that my position makes no sense, since I'm always arguing that meets are too long.

Ordinary track meets, yes. The OT, no. By necessity you take two weekends off your job to do the Trials properly. You give your whole life over to running, jumping and throwing. Both the watching and the discussion thereof.

And you watch it with friends from far-flung corners, sharing that common bond that is tracknuttism. Your family and normal friends don't understand, but who cares? This is your passion. Your reason for being laid out and bared for all the world to see.

Revel in it, my friends, for it only comes once every four years. This is the year!

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