



from the editor

E. Garry Hill

IF ASKED TO CHARACTERIZE THE WORST YEAR for track & field of the 43 years that I've been laboring here at good old *T&FN*, the one-word answer would be "faaantastic!" Like fine California wine, our sport has no bad vintages. Some are just better than others.

I'm happy to report that at least from where I sit, few have been finer than 2012.

For the first time in a long time, the Olympic Games felt like a World Championships meet

It's easy to hazard a guess that most of the high-end years are the Olympic years, but that's not actually the case, at least for those lucky enough to go to the meets.

The hustle and bustle, crass commercialization and outlandish prices that now come with the Games have made them a turnoff for many people.

The easier flow of a World Championships makes those affairs the destination

of choice for those who want pure track & field, unadulterated by other sports. What made London stand out for me was that despite being hustly, bustly, commercialized and outlandishly priced, it still felt like a real track meet. Indeed, for the first time in a long time, it felt like a World Championships meet.

I'm guessing that if Britain doesn't have more fans of the sport per capita than any other nation, it's right up there. That translated to an unbelievably raucous stadium. And not just in the evenings, which we've seen before, but also 80,000-strong for the morning sessions. I can't remember the last Games I was at (maybe Munich '72?) where the stands were full in the morning not because somebody had bused in a horde of school kids or trucked over a contingent of military personnel.

They were there because they wanted to be there! And they paid good money for the privilege of so doing. And they created an unbelievable atmosphere. More than once it brought tears to my eyes just to see our sport and its athletes being worshiped so dearly.

London was the ultimate piece of the puzzle, but there were other things that made '12 one of the all-time greats:

- Another Olympic Trials in Eugene, which does the meet like no other city can, even if the weather is fit for (groan) ducks.
- David Rudisha's wire-to-wire World Record in the 800. One of the most stirring single performances ever.
- WADA's "biological passport" program progressed to the point where people are now getting busted for suspicious blood profiles indicating past use, not just positive tests.

• Athletes (primarily Americans) taking on the suits in a battle over who has rights to make money off them and who can restrict their ability to sell themselves how. Unfortunately, I think more than a few of them don't understand that they're unlikely to become rich on their own, and that if the sport's major benefactors get scared away the overall effect will be a negative one. But more power to them in their search for a better way to run things.

They, after all, are what the sport is all about. And I thank every one of them for a year I'll not soon forget.

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