



from the editor

E. Garry Hill

COLOR ME GREEDY. Pages 36 & 37 of this issue contain some of the best news we've printed in a long time. But I want more-more-more!

What we're celebrating here is that improved competitive opportunities at the domestic level are on the way, and as I said in opening last May's column, "Nothing breeds a sharper edge than high-level competition. And a sharp edge is what America's best athletes will need this year if they're to do anything of note."

A ray of hope for domestic competition for U.S. pros?

But I continued, "I'm left wondering, again, just how they're supposed to do it, given that the country is now almost totally devoid of meets in which to find any competition, let alone that of the high-level variety."

So you've got to love Drake's plans to expand its offering. And to find the money to pay for such an upgrade. But that will come and go in April, 8 full weeks before the nation's best return to Des Moines for the Moscow-selection action. That's no small gap.

Which is why the new San Diego venture in May is so welcome. As is USATF's continued support of Oxy's High-Performance meet. We also continue to sing hallelujah for meets like the Georgia Tech Invitational, Arizona's Elite Throwers meet and the NTC Classic in Florida.

But—setting aside the U.S.'s two Diamond League meets, because those aren't for the masses—that's about it when it comes to post-collegians honing their skills as they attempt to make national teams.

I initially touched on this crucial subject in this space in the July '11 issue, when I asked, "What If They Didn't Give Any Track Meets?"

We're talking about the weeks/months leading into the USATF Championships, in which weekend after weekend goes by without a single U.S. event that would remotely rouse the ticket-buying public's interest. Not offering anything to the fan base is bad enough, but the real tragedy here is the almost complete lack of meaningful competition in the time leading up to the Nationals for the majority of American athletes.

Obviously, the sport's superstars—the Suhr, Felix, Richards-Ross and Gatlin type of performer—can find a meet just about whenever they want, but we're talking about the great mass of people in the supporting cast. Having the Best Actor winner in your play is great, but without a lot of talented supporting-cast members running around, the production will be hollow.

So, hoorah for what we've got, but it has to get better yet. Which certainly isn't easy in these perilous economic times.

All of which brings me back to this year's indoor season. Millrose was spectacular, to be sure, and Boston was also eminently watchable. But for an "indoor circuit" that was about it. And the good people of Albuquerque did their best to put on a good USATF Championships (see p. 18), but let's face it: in a non-World Championships year, with no national-team selection on the line, the meet suffered mightily from a lack of top-notch talent.

You might say, "Well, then it was a perfect meet for the 'masses' you've been trumpeting here." It would indeed be such if the timing were better, but February has nothing to do with wanting to have your best team on the field come August in Russia.

So as I concluded last year, it seems to me that we've reached a crossroads without most people realizing it. Track & field has contracted to the point where USATF can keep either the indoor or outdoor version of the sport alive, but not both. And attempting to nurture both leads to neither receiving the standard of care that's required.

It's time for indoor—at least in odd-numbered years—to become a federation afterthought.

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