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# from the editor

*E. Gary Heil*

MOST OF MY LIFE REVOLVES AROUND THE PRO SIDE of the sport these days. But deep down inside, there’s still nothing I like more than following the NCAA side of things. I just wish that those who run that part of the sport made it easier to be a fan.

Let me start my expression of dissatisfaction with the way things play out by taking issue with a phrase that has its birth in spring-training baseball. You know, when they talk about “split-squad games.”

**It's not easy to be a fan of NCAA track & field**

Fine, the world champion Giants have so much talent to sort out that half the prospective roster plays the A’s and the other half plays the Diamondbacks. But when we switch to *our sport* and Paleolithic Tech sends out a release

explaining that the Mighty Mastodons are having a “split-squad weekend” I wanna brack.

I mean, I get it, track is the ultimate individual sport, but one of the best parts of the collegiate side of things has always been the team nature of it. Or at least the illusion thereof. Even if scholarship limits—and the move away from coaching field events, which is a subject for another day—has rendered the team-scoring meet all but extinct, I want my Masties competing as a cohesive team unit somewhere.

I don’t want the distance runners heading to Q-friendly Stanford while the throwers are somewhere else and the sprinters are at the warmest-weather spot available.

I want them all in the same place, dadgummit! I also want them competing head-to-head in meaningful competition, but that’s a pipe-dream for another day—at almost all levels of the sport, unfortunately.

As a guy who started his life on the statistical side of things I’m also majorly depressed at what the NCAA has done to the numbers that determine so much of what happens.

Indoors? Forget about what’s a legal-sized track. Make up some voodoo numbers and let everybody into the Nationals. I realize that not all tracks are created equal. I also realize that at schools that have the oversized monsters that they’re part of a multi-use facility and the track program had nothing to do with the construction thereof. Outdoors? Who cares about niceties like wind readings until they’re off the chart? Encourage institutions to accept school records with marks that violate all the records principles that govern the sport? Sure, why not?

OK, call all that old-school thinking. How about some new-school thinking, which means how the sport’s results are represented online? One of the greatest boons to results presentation has been the invention of “live results,” in which a meet gives you the results of races as they happen (and if you’re really lucky, jump-by-jump or throw-by-throw in the field).

But have you ever noticed that in NCAA title meets that the “live” results virtually never update during the preliminary rounds? You have to wait until the whole sequence of races is over. Apparently the rationale is that they don’t want to confer any unfair advantage to subsequent races. Like somebody can decide to run 0.01 faster or slower in a 100 after seeing the bubble mark, right?

There’s also the matter of athlete status. On pages 12 & 13 of this issue you’ll find our NCAA Championships formcharts. And our mavens have worked long and hard to make them as accurate as possible, but you know what? There are people on there who are going to end up redshirting or have a serious injury that has gone unmentioned.

And if you try to find out the status of people whose status is up in the air, all too frequently the coaches and/or sports information departments will invoke the “privacy rights” clause and tell you nothing. Does that happen in the big team sports? Of course not. But then, we’re not viewed as one of the major sports. Insert :- ( here.