I’M SURE WE’VE ALL SAID IT a million times: “If only I had that to do over again.” But, of course, do-overs are generally the things of fantasy, never realized.

It’s with great pleasure, then, that I can note how wondrous it must have been for Adam Nelson to get a do-over on the medal ceremony from the ’04 Olympics. Nelson, you may remember, ended up with a galling silver from that shot competition, losing on the countback to Yuriy Bilonoh.

In these days of extended windows of opportunity, the Ukrainian strongman’s Greek sample was retested last year and came up positive, so in December of ’12 he was stripped of gold. That didn’t necessarily mean that Nelson was going to get the prize bauble, because the IOC hasn’t been consistent in filling vacated medal spots. But in May the decision was made in his favor and the game was afoot.

At the USATF Championships, with higher-ups Max Siegel and Stephanie Hightower doing the presentation honors, another awards ceremony was held, with Nelson receiving an olive wreath and hearing the national anthem.

“If you loved the upper of the original, well this is even better.”

—Nick Phillips
happiefeet.blogspot.com

“The way I look at it, I’ve got the rest of my life to be the gold medalist. I’ve been able to celebrate with my wife and girls and I couldn’t have done that nine years ago.

“Better late than never,” he said before taking a victory lap with his young daughters.

“Hopefully the message is that it pays to do things the right way. It may not pay right away, but in the long term you’ll always have your integrity and eventually it will pay off.”

What he doesn’t have yet is the original gold medal; apparently Bilonoh has yet to return it.

The way things played out, the announcing crew drove 8 hours from Athens, slept for about 3 hours and then hit the venerable grounds at dawn, just in time to see the sun come up over the ruins out of which the athletes would later enter for the competition.

If that’s my do-over for life, I’ll take it.

COINCIDENTALLY, shortly before the Des Moines goings-on, somebody had asked me what my favorite Olympic moment of all was, and after 10 of them (Munich through London, with a miss on Moscow) the answer was easy: the ’04 shot. The shot is perhaps my favorite event, which helps, but it could have been anything they staged in Ancient Olympia.

The stuff of dreams: Nelson got a do-over of his ’04 Olympic victory ceremony.

E. Gary Heid