



from the editor

E. Garry Hill

THE 2015 DIAMOND LEAGUE SCHEDULE IS OUT. Out in left field, that is. Building on last month's rant about this year's huge midsummer gap between Diamond League meetings, let's look at that timetable (see p. 48 for details).

Guess what? There's no improvement. It's again a mess. At least it is if you're like me and think that big gaps in the middle of the season—or bunching of meets—are totally unacceptable when it comes to trying to market the sport.

**5 DL meets in 14 days in May/June?
0 DL meets in August?**

5 meets in 14 days bridging the end of May and the start of June?

No DL meets at all in what might be considered the most important month of them all, August?

As detailed in the last issue, depending on the event, this year's DL athletes had a hiatus of anywhere from 34 to 49 days between series meets, with an average of 39.5. The assignment

of events for next year hasn't been done yet, but the *minimum* gap rises to an obscene 35 days (which means that at least half the events will be a minimum of 40 days apart).

At least this time around there's a World Championships in between, so it's not as if high-end clashes will completely disappear. That's the good news. The bad is that the gap between the last pre-WC DL meet and the WC has also risen to an all-time high of 23 days.

Check out the accompanying chart of this century's 8 World Champs years, 2001–15. For the purposes of continuity the pre-DL meets (Golden League) are tagged with the same name. So there you have it: more than 3 weeks between Stockholm and Beijing, as the important month of August has exactly 0 Diamond League meets in '15.

The 3 biggest years on the chart ('07, '11, '15) all represent WC meets held in Asia, and I've heard the rationale that the extra days are needed for time-zone adjustment. I have two responses to that:

- If time adjustment is so crucial, why is it acceptable to stage the first post-WC invitational—a crucial Diamond League final—just 4-5 days after the Championships? Doesn't it cut both ways?
- Beijing is a 6-hour difference from Central European Time (the gold standard for summer meets). If that merits more than 2 weeks, how is it that 14 days was good enough for Edmonton—which is 8 hours away—in '01?

I'd also posit that at most a week is needed for the athletes to make a 6-8 hour adjustment.

Using that as a yardstick, if an 8-day break was deemed enough for European-hosted WCs in '03 and '05, why isn't 15 days enough this time around?

I thought the IAAF was taking more control of the calendar with the inception of the Diamond League, but it's looking to me like they now have less.

At this point, let me repeat myself. As I said last month, "I can't think of any other sport that would have its biggest names almost completely go without head-to-head competition in the middle of its prime season. And don't think for a moment that the media and advertisers, the key to the sport's continued high-end health, don't notice such things. I just don't see them getting a lot of bang for their buck."

I'm not getting enough for mine.

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DL/WC Timing Gaps

The days ("d") are from the last pre-WC DL to the WC, from the pre-WC DL to the post-WC DL and from the WC to the next DL:

| year | DL/WC | pre/post | WC/DL |
|------|-------|----------|-------|
| 2001 | 14d | 28d | 5d |
| 2003 | 08d | 21d | 5d |
| 2005 | 08d | 21d | 5d |
| 2007 | 18d | 31d | 5d |
| 2009 | 15d | 28d | 5d |
| 2011 | 21d | 33d | 4d |
| 2013 | 14d | 26d | 4d |
| 2015 | 23d | 35d | 4d |